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ABSTRACT

Defining literacy development as a continuous process that has its roots in the home, this training guide is intended to enhance the skills of Head Start staff in collaborating with families to support the development of children's language skills. The guide also describes the emerging literacy for children from birth through the preschool years. Following an introductory section, the guide presents four training modules. Each module details expected outcomes, key concepts, background information, learning activities and next steps. Handouts are included for each module. Module One, "Emerging Literacy: Supporting a Natural Process," provides an overview of emerging literacy. Module Two, "From Cooing to Talking: Partners in Conversation," enhances staff ability to listen and respond to children, engage them, and encourage their use of listening and speaking skills. Module Three, "The Magic World of Reading: Opening Doors for Children," helps staff improve their skills in enhancing children's enjoyment and understanding of books. Module Four, "Setting the Stage for Literacy Explorations," allows staff to create literacy-rich environments in Head Start settings and promote literacy exploration through the environment and activities related to children's interests. The final sections of the guide include a continuing professional development section which suggests activities to enhance skills developed through this guide, and a resource section which offers more information concerning topics covered in the guide. (SD)

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HEAD START®

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

Emerging Literacy: Linking Social Competence to Learning

ED 424 017

PS 026995

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
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Emerging Literacy: Linking Social Competence and Learning

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

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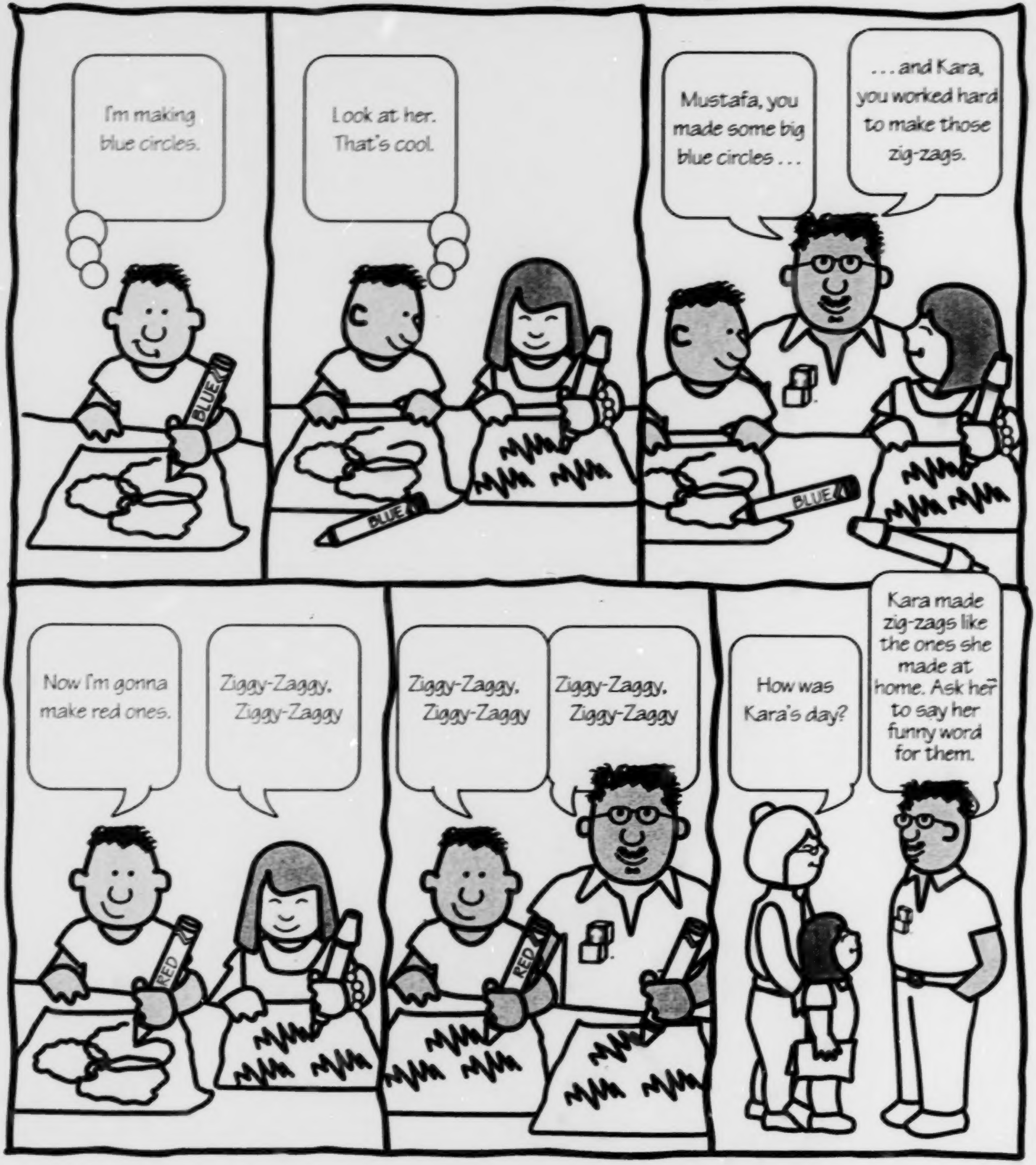
Preface

Small Talk = Big Learning


I'm making blue circles.
BLUE
Look at her. That's cool.
BLUE
Mustafa, you made some big blue circles . . .
. . . and Kara, you worked hard to make those zig-zags.
BLUE
Now I'm gonna make red ones.
Ziggy-Zaggy. Ziggy-Zaggy
RED
Ziggy-Zaggy. Ziggy-Zaggy
Ziggy-Zaggy. Ziggy-Zaggy
RED
How was Kara's day?
Kara made zig-zags like the ones she made at home. Ask her to say her funny word for them.

Preface

This technical guide is about emerging literacy—the gradual, ongoing process through which children naturally make sense of oral language (listening and speaking) and written language (reading and writing). This process is supported by caring families and attentive teachers who respond to children's communications and provide children with the time, space, and materials to make their own literacy discoveries.

Learning about language begins at birth when parents look lovingly into their babies' faces and welcome them to the world. It continues when adults respond to babies' coos, cries, gurgles, and babbles and later when they marvel at toddlers' first words. As children grow and develop, they ask to be read to, make requests, and start conversations. Soon, they are exploring literacy on their own—looking at books, scribbling on paper, making up stories, and holding conversations with each other.

The cartoon on the facing page shows some simple strategies families and Head Start staff can use to support children's emerging literacy. Two children, Mustafa and Kara, are learning about writing. Mustafa and Kara already know a lot about language. They can:

- Hold writing tools such as crayons and markers
- Control writing tools to make circles and zig-zag lines on paper
- Play with words such as *zig-zag*
- Enjoy talking to and laughing with other people

Their teacher stops by to encourage their efforts:

- He describes what they are doing.
- He introduces a new word—*zig-zag*.
- He lets them know that their scribbles are important.
- He sits down and scribbles with them.
- He joins in when Kara makes up a funny word.
- He shares information with Kara's grandmother so Kara can learn about language at home and at Head Start.

Preface

This guide will help participants develop skills such as those used by the teacher in the cartoon. These skills encourage children's emerging literacy by responding to their interests and efforts rather than by providing direct instruction. Most children will make many discoveries about language on their own when families and Head Start staff do the following:

- Watch, listen, and respond to children's gestures and words
- Talk with children and encourage children to talk with their peers
- Read aloud to children regularly and talk with children about the characters, plots, settings, and information in books
- Provide reading and writing materials that children can use by themselves
- Show children through their actions that reading and writing are important, valuable skills that can be used every day to have fun and accomplish tasks

Young children begin learning about language through their relationships with their families. Whether the home language is English or another language, children's home language experiences set the stage for later literacy learning. For all children, their home language is associated with love and security; it is the link to their culture and family values. When families do the things described above, their children are more likely to be successful in school.

Head Start staff should never lose sight of the important language learning that takes place at home. Supporting families in creating literacy-rich home environments is one of the most important things Head Start can do to encourage children's emerging literacy.

Introduction

Overview

Purpose

This technical guide is designed to enhance the skills of education staff in collaborating with families to support children's development of language skills.

Emerging Literacy: Linking Social Competence and Learning describes emerging literacy for children from birth through the preschool years. The emerging literacy philosophy does not refer to children's readiness to learn different language skills. Instead, literacy development is seen as *a continuous process which begins in infancy with exposure to oral language, written language, books, and stories. It is a process that has its roots in the home, with branches extending to other environments.*[1]

Head Start is among the most important of these branches. Whether children and families are enrolled in center, home-based, family child care (FCC home), or combination programs, Head Start staff are in an ideal position to build on the language learning that takes place in each child's home. This guide helps staff create literacy-rich environments in center, group socialization, and FCC home settings and gives families the information, support, and materials they need to encourage their children's emerging literacy. Participants learn how to engage children in meaningful conversations, help children express their own ideas and feelings, promote a love of reading, encourage children by listening to what they are trying to say rather than correcting the way they say it, and set the stage for children to make their own literacy discoveries.

Outcomes

After completing this guide, participants will be able to:

- Support children's acquisition of emerging literacy skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—in the context of home, family, and the program
- Converse with children in ways that encourage them to talk with other people
- Encourage children to develop a love of reading that will support their learning in school
- Provide culturally relevant language and literacy experiences that offer many opportunities for children to express themselves and build knowledge and understanding

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[1] Dorothy S. Strickland and Lesley Mandel Morrow, editors, *Emerging Literacy: Young Children Learn to Read and Write* (Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1989), vii.

- Collaborate with parents and other staff to create literacy-rich environments (in home, center, group socialization, and FCC home settings) that allow children to explore the different ways people use written words (print) to communicate and record thoughts and ideas
- Support children's skills in their home languages as they acquire English language skills

Audience

This guide is for education staff in center, home-based, and combination settings, including classroom teams (teachers, assistants, and volunteers) and home visitors. It is also appropriate for FCC providers. Interested family members may want to participate.

Performance Standards

This guide supports the following child development and education concepts, which are based on the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*:

- Parents are the principal influence in their children's lives.
- Staff and parents share information about emerging literacy. They plan ways to support language development in home, center, group socialization, and/or FCC home settings.
- Staff help children understand and use language in an environment that encourages easy communication among children and between children and adults.
- Staff can create an environment in which children gradually work toward recognizing that letters and numbers are symbols that represent concepts and ideas.
- Programs recruit staff, volunteers, and consultants who can talk to children in their home languages.
- The curriculum is consistent with the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, is based on sound child development principles about how children grow and learn, and supports each child's social and emotional development, cognitive and language skills, and physical development.
- The child development and education approach for all children is developmentally and linguistically appropriate, responds to each child

as an individual, and supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity, and family composition.

- Head Start should support family literacy through materials, services, and activities that are provided by the program or through referral to another agency in the community.

Organization

This technical guide, *Emerging Literacy: Linking Social Competence and Learning*, is designed to further develop the skills that education staff need to promote children's emerging literacy—their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

By completing the activities in this guide, participants will achieve the following Guide Outcomes:

- Provide environments that encourage children to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills—at home and at Head Start
- Respond to children's nonverbal and verbal communications and encourage children to express their ideas and feelings to others
- Read aloud to and with children every day—one-on-one and in small groups—to introduce children to books and oral and written language, promote thinking skills, and encourage children to love books and learning
- Plan and carry out literacy experiences that build on children's interests and activities
- Model the many ways adults use oral and written language to accomplish goals, provide information, and communicate with other people
- Respect and build on children's home language skills while providing opportunities for them to learn English language skills

Each module includes module outcomes, key concepts, and background information. The Module Outcomes were developed from the Guide Outcomes. *Emerging Literacy: Linking Social Competence and Learning* contains the following modules:

- **Module 1:** *Emerging Literacy: Supporting a Natural Process*

  This module provides an overview of emerging literacy, the four interrelated language skills, and the skills used to support the language development of all children, including those who are learning a second language and those with disabilities.

- **Module 2:** *From Cooing to Talking: Partners in Conversation*

  This module enhances the staff's ability to listen and respond to children, engage them as equal partners in conversations, and encourage their use of listening and speaking skills during routines, while playing with peers, and during other daily activities.

- **Module 3:** *The Magic World of Reading: Opening Doors for Children*

  This module helps staff improve their skills in choosing books, reading aloud to children, inviting discussions about books, and planning follow-up activities that enhance children's enjoyment and understanding of books.

- **Module 4:** *Setting the Stage for Literacy Explorations*

  This module allows staff to create literacy-rich environments in Head Start settings, recognize and support children's drawing and writing skills, and promote literacy exploration through the environment and activities related to children's experiences and interests.

Each module has specific outcomes for participants to achieve, and each activity is designed to fulfill one or more outcome. For easy reference, the outcomes are listed with the activity.

Each module includes a Key Concepts section that summarizes the main ideas addressed in the workshop and coaching activities. The Background Information section of each module provides a more detailed discussion of the key concepts. Trainers can use this information to review the content covered in the module, present mini-lectures, or distribute as a resource for participants.

Each module closes with Next Steps, suggested activities for building on the skills developed through this guide. Some of the activities can be documented in a participant's professional portfolio, an ongoing collection of items that demonstrate an individual's professional growth and achievement.

Continuing Professional Development, a section that appears after the modules, includes suggested activities participants can undertake to sustain and enhance the skills they develop through this guide.

A Resources section at the end of the guide describes books, journal articles, and audiovisual materials that offer in-depth information about the topics covered in this guide.

Introduction

The Appendices section of the guide provides participants with detailed information that they may use as they complete the activities in the guide and as a resource on the job.

The following Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community can be used in conjunction with this guide:

Observation and Recording: Tools for Decision Making

Engaging Parents

Setting the Stage: Including Children with Disabilities in Head Start

Individualizing: A Plan for Success

Curriculum: A Blueprint for Action

Definition of Icons

Coaching	A training strategy that fosters the development of skills through tailored instruction, demonstrations, practice, and feedback. The activities are written for a coach to work closely with one to three participants.
Workshop	A facilitated group training strategy that fosters the development of skills through activities that build on learning through group interaction. These activities are written for up to twenty-five participants working in small or large groups with one or two trainers.
Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice	Activities assigned by the trainer immediately following the completion of the module to help participants review key information, practice skills, and examine their progress toward expected outcomes of the module.
Continuing Professional Development	Follow-up activities for the program to support continued staff development in the regular use of the skills addressed in a particular training guide. They include: (1) Opportunities for the participant to continue building on the skills learned in the training (2) Ways to identify new skills and knowledge needed to expand and/or complement these skills through opportunities in areas such as higher education, credentialing, or community educational programs

At A Glance

Module	Activity	Time	Materials
Module 1: Emerging Literacy: Supporting a Natural Process	(W) Activity 1–1: The Purpose of Language	120 minutes	*Handout 1: How and Why Children Use Language Skills* *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing*
	(C) Activity 1–2: Emerging Literacy: Step by Step by Step	120 minutes	*Handout 2: Emerging Literacy—An Ongoing Process* *Handout 3: Observation Summary* *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing* Chart paper, markers, tape
	(W) Activity 1–3: The Comforts of Home	240 minutes	*Handout 4: Magical Memories* *Handout 5: Encouraging Children's Language Development* Chart paper, markers, tape
	(C) Activity 1–4: Capturing the Memories	180 minutes	*Handout 6: Creating a Language Album* *Appendix A: Responding to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Children and Families* *Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders* Chart paper, markers, tape

Module	Activity	Time	Materials
Module 2: From Cooing to Talking: Partners in Conversation	(W) Activity 2–1: I'm Listening to You	120 minutes	*Handout 7: Talking, Playing, Teaching, and Learning* *Handout 8: Encouraging Children's Communication* *Handout 9: Teaching Roles (for trainer only)* *Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders* *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing* Age-appropriate toys (for example, snap-lock beads; small, colored blocks; Legos; and/or beads and laces), index cards, chart paper, markers, tape
	(C) Activity 2–2: Talking and Listening Together	180 minutes	*Handout 10: Observing Language Skills* *Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders* *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing* Chart paper, markers, tape
	(W) Activity 2–3: Teaching Children to Play the Conversation Game	150 minutes	*Handout 11: Overcoming Challenges to Conversations* *Appendix D: Playing the Conversation Game* Index cards, chart paper, markers, tape

Module	Activity	Time	Materials
Module 2: From Cooing to Talking: Partners in Conversation (Continued)	(C) Activity 2–4: Won't You Be My Conversation Partner?	150 minutes	*Handout 12: Practicing the Conversation Game* *Appendix D: Playing the Conversation Game* Chart paper, markers, tape
Module 3: The Magic World of Reading: Opening Doors for Children	(W) Activity 3–1: What Makes a Good Book Good?	120 minutes	*Handout 13: What Makes a Good Book Good?* *Appendix E: Books for Young Children* *Appendix F: Choosing Books with Diverse Characters and Themes for Young Children* *Appendix G: Getting to Know Children's Literature* Chart paper, markers, tape, index cards Pictures or photographs of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers looking at books Children's books (one for each participant) Pamphlets, brochures, book lists, and other materials about the early childhood services offered by the local library (one set for each participant)
	(C) Activity 3–2: Taking Stock: Choosing the Right Books	180 minutes	*Handout 14: Book Inventory* *Appendix E: Books for Young Children* *Appendix F: Choosing Books with Diverse Characters and Themes for Young Children* Pamphlets, brochures, book lists, and other materials about the early childhood services offered by the local library (one set for each participant) Chart paper, markers, tape

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Module	Activity	Time	Materials
Module 3: The Magic World of Reading: Opening Doors for Children (Continued)	(W) Activity 3–3: Will You Read to Me?	120 minutes	*Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers* *Appendix H: Reading with Babies and Toddlers* Chart paper, markers, tape Children's books (one per small group)
	(C) Activity 3–4: Would You Like to Hear a Story?	180 minutes	*Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers* *Handout 16: Portrait of an Emergent Reader* *Handout 17: Responding to an Emergent Reader* *Handout 18: Open-Ended Questions for Reading Aloud* *Appendix H: Reading with Babies and Toddlers* Chart paper, markers, tape
Module 4: Setting the Stage for Literacy Explorations	(W) Activity 4–1: Creating a Literacy-Rich Environment	150 minutes	*Handout 19: Creating a Literacy Environment* *Handout 20: Setting Up a Library Area* *Handout 21: Setting Up a Writing Area* *Handout 22: Encouraging Literacy in All Interest Areas* *Handout 23: Using Print in the Environment* *Handout 24: Helping Your Child Become a Reader* Chart paper, markers, tape Art materials Catalogs

Module	Activity	Time	Materials
Module 4: Setting the Stage for Literacy Explorations (Continued)	(C) Activity 4–2: We Want to Read and Write	180 minutes	*Handout 20: Setting Up a Library Area* *Handout 21: Setting Up a Writing Area* *Handout 22: Encouraging Literacy in All Interest Areas* *Handout 23: Using Print in the Environment* *Handout 24: Helping Your Child Become a Reader* Chart paper, markers, tape
	(W) Activity 4–3: Making Our Mark	150 minutes	*Handout 25: Planning Literacy Experiences* *Appendix I: Learning about Writing* Chart paper, markers, tape
	(C) Activity 4–4: Language All around Us	150 minutes	*Handout 26: Children Learn about Writing* *Handout 27: Emerging Literacy Planning Web* *Appendix I: Learning about Writing* Chart paper, markers, tape

W = Workshop Activities
C = Coaching Activities

Module 1

Emerging Literacy: Supporting a Natural Process

In this module, participants learn to observe and support children's emerging literacy, collaborate with families to support children's language learning in different settings, and examine their own literacy skills.

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, staff will be able to:

- Support the ongoing, natural process of emerging literacy for all children, including those who are learning a second language and those with disabilities
- Collaborate with families to support children's language learning at home and in Head Start settings
- Analyze their own use of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills so they can serve as models for children

Key Concepts

- Emerging literacy refers to the gradual, ongoing process of developing language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Development of language skills begins in infancy and continues throughout life. Children learn about language in the same way they learn about other experiences—by imitating, exploring, experimenting, trying out their ideas, and participating in their cultures.
- Children's language learning is rooted in the caring environment of their homes and families.
- Opportunities for language learning are a natural part of home, center, group socialization, and/or FCC home settings. Head Start staff and families collaborate to support children's language development.
- Children first learn to listen and speak. Then they use these and other skills to explore reading and writing. Each language skill contributes to the development of the others.
- Language learning is closely related to cognitive development. Language skills are primary avenues for learning.

- Language learning is closely related to social development. Language skills are essential elements of social competence. Listening and speaking skills allow children to learn how to play and get along with others.

Background Information

Emerging literacy is the gradual, ongoing development of language skills that takes place from birth through the early elementary years. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are interconnected pieces of emerging literacy. Children first learn to listen and speak. They make sense of the language they hear and learn to express their own ideas and feelings. Then they use these and other skills to explore reading and writing. Each of these language skills contributes to the development and use of the others.

Listening and Speaking

Emerging literacy begins in infancy when parents and teachers respond to babies' coos and smiles, sing lullabies, and play games such as peek-a-boo. These natural interactions help children learn about the give and take of conversation and the pleasures of communicating with other people. Young children continue to develop listening and speaking skills as they communicate their needs and wants through sounds and gestures, say their first words, and rapidly add new words to their vocabularies. Soon, children are participating in conversations, using their words to solve problems, and telling long, complicated stories about real and imaginary events.

Reading and Writing

At the same time as they are gaining listening and speaking skills, young children are exploring reading and writing. A child may play with alphabet blocks, point out a logo at a familiar restaurant, listen to favorite books and retell the stories on her own, use drawing and writing tools, and watch an adult write her spoken words on paper. By the time children leave the preschool years, most have made numerous discoveries about reading and writing. For example, they know that we combine letters to make words; read the words in books, not the pictures; and, in English and many other languages, read and write from left to right and from top to bottom on each page. Most children have discovered the connection between spoken and written words—printed words are talk that has been written down.

Children's Home Languages

Children's language learning is rooted in their home and family environment. Starting in infancy, children associate the words, tones, and expressions of their home language with feelings of security. Although children may one day learn a second language, their home language will always allow them to feel connected to their families and cultures. As children acquire and use their home language they also learn many skills and concepts.

When Head Start staff and families collaborate to support language learning, children can retain skills in their home language while learning a second language. This support also allows children to continue developing cognitively, without unnecessary interruptions. The ability to communicate in more than one language is an asset children can use throughout their lives. (See *Appendix A: Responding to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Children and Families* for more information about supporting children who are learning one language at home and English at Head Start.)

The *Head Start Program Performance Standards* state that staff and program consultants should be able to effectively communicate with children and families with no or limited English proficiency. When education staff do not speak a child's home language, they can address this standard by learning key words and phrases in the home language so they can support the child's language development. Similarly, when a child who is deaf and uses sign language is enrolled in Head Start, staff should learn a few basic signs so they can communicate with the child.

Progress in Language Development

Every child develops according to an inner time clock that is set at his or her individualized pace for gaining new skills. Any group of young children is likely to include a wide range of language abilities. Home, community, and Head Start environments—including people, materials, and experiences—play a role in determining how and when a child develops language skills.

It can be difficult to determine accurately whether a young child is making progress in his or her language learning or is experiencing a language delay. Some children may say very little or speak in a way that is hard for others to understand. Sometimes language difficulties disappear as a child has opportunities to listen to and speak with adults and peers or becomes more comfortable in the Head Start setting. (See *Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders* for more information on this topic.)

The Link to Cognitive Development

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are primary avenues for cognitive development. Language allows children to talk about their experiences and discoveries and modify their understanding of the world. Children can use their language skills to organize their thinking. They learn the words used to describe concepts and talk about past and future events. For example, by talking about yesterday and tomorrow, children learn to tell the difference between past and future events. To gain information, children ask questions and identify printed words such as their names on cubbies and the daily job chart. They express ideas and tell stories, make signs to protect their block structures, and write their names on paintings. After listening to a story, children can talk about the people, feelings, places, things, and events in the book and discuss how they are alike and different from their own experiences.

Language and Social Competence

Language skills are essential elements of social competence. Children use their listening and speaking skills to play and get along with others and to make friends. In the preschool years, children use language to make up dramatic play scenarios and become real or imaginary characters. They use language to negotiate, take turns, and express anger with words rather than physical aggression. Through conversations with adults and other children, preschoolers learn to listen to others and share their own ideas and feelings.

While learning how to use oral language to express themselves, young children also learn about the nonverbal communications typical of their families and cultures. They pay attention to other people's facial expressions, gestures, and body language and interpret what they mean. Children use both verbal and nonverbal communication to send messages to others.

How Children Learn about Language

One of the ways young children learn about language is by watching, listening to, and responding to adults—at home, at Head Start, and in the community. When adults interact with children and model language skills, they show children how to use language. Young children also learn about language in the same way they make sense of other experiences—through active learning. As children imitate, explore, experiment, and try out their ideas, they acquire knowledge about language. This happens over time, as children live and play in homes, classrooms, and communities filled with language—songs, rhymes, talk, books, and print. They learn new words, master standard rules of grammar, and recognize letters of the alphabet. They also learn how language is used to communicate ideas and feelings, send messages, ask for information, and make requests.

Conventional Reading and Writing

By the time most children enter the elementary school years, they know a lot about language. As with other kinds of development, each child has acquired a unique set of emerging literacy skills that are the result of language explorations at home and in other settings. When children have gained sufficient knowledge about reading and writing, they begin to read and write in conventional ways, following the established rules of their language. Just as they learned to listen and speak without direct instruction, many children begin conventional reading and writing by using what they already know to make new discoveries, solve problems, and ask questions—*How do you make a* B*? What does this say?*

All Children Can Develop Literacy Skills[1]

All children, including children with disabilities, can learn to communicate and develop literacy-related skills. Head Start staff and families can individualize the strategies they use to encourage emerging literacy so that all children have opportunities to be actively involved in literacy learning. Staff and families can consult with speech, occupational, and/or physical therapists to learn how to adapt home and classroom environments, drawing and writing materials, books, and their own interactions. Such adaptations make it possible for all children to have daily opportunities to write, scribble, draw, color, enjoy books, and communicate with others. Some examples follow:

- To help children talk about stories, use communication boards and devices.
- To make it easier to turn pages, glue popsicle stick tabs to each page or glue pieces of sponge in the upper right hand corners of book pages to add space between the pages.
- To make it easier for a child to see a book, place the book on an angled bookstand and place it close to the child. Attach the book to the stand with Velcro so the book won't fall off.
- To help children make requests, use a communication board with interactive symbols—Read It Again, Act It Out, Questions, Comments, Target Words from Each Page.
- To help children draw and write, use special holders for crayons, pencils, and markers.
- To give children access to drawing, reading, and writing, use a computer with appropriate software and an adaptive switch.

In addition to learning to use language to achieve goals and make sense of their world, many children also gain a love for words. They enjoy talking and playing with friends and family, making up songs, looking at books, and telling stories. For these children, listening, speaking, reading, and writing are valuable skills that help them become lifelong learners who contribute to their families and communities. By continually improving their own language and literacy skills, Head Start staff and families can be lifelong learners, too.

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[1] Based on Patsy L. Pierce, "Emergent Literacy: What Children Can Learn About Reading and Writing Before They Go to School." In P. Pierce, editor, *Baby Power: A Guide for Families for Using Assistive Technology with Their Infants and Toddlers* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The Center for Literacy and Disability Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

Like the general population in the United States, Head Start families represent a wide range of literacy skills. Some parents are avid readers, others read seldom, and still others do not read at all because they do not know how. To avoid embarrassing parents, Head Start staff should never assume that everyone can read and write. They should have accurate knowledge of an individual's literacy skills before asking him or her to do something that requires reading or writing.

Activity 1–1: The Purpose of Language

Purpose: In this activity, participants examine their own use of language skills and learn about children's language learning at different stages of development.

Outcomes:

Participants support the ongoing, natural process of emerging literacy for all children, including those who are learning a second language and those with disabilities.

Participants analyze their own use of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills so they can serve as models for children.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 1: How and Why Children Use Language Skills
Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on emerging literacy and the reasons why adults and children use language. If you plan to use other modules in the guide, explain that Modules 2, 3, and 4 each focus on specific language skills and how they are related to each other.

2. Use the Background Information for this module to present an overview of emerging literacy. Emphasize that listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are interconnected and gained over time. Young children develop and practice these skills simultaneously. Each language skill supports and enhances the development of the others.

3. Ask participants to think of the ways they use language—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—during a typical day. Walk them through the day, from waking up to going to sleep. Stop frequently to discuss what skills they used and why they used them. Record participants' answers on chart paper in two columns: one labeled *Skill* and one labeled *Why?* Some examples follow:

When you woke up this morning, did you use a language skill?
(Skill: Listening and speaking. Why?: Heard the weather report on the radio and told my children they could wear shorts.)

What language skills did you use while preparing breakfast?
(Skill: Reading. Why?: Learned how long to toast the waffles.)

What language skills did you use during your break at work?
(Skill: Writing. Why?: Wrote a birthday card for a friend.)

What language skills did you use during outdoor play time?
(Skills: Listening and speaking. Why? Talked with children about their activities.)

4. Write the following reasons[2] why we use language skills on chart paper. Include additional reasons if you like. Leave space to write under each reason.

    - To make a request
    - To complain about something
    - To say *hello* or *goodbye*
    - To respond to a communication
    - To get information
    - To think, plan, and solve problems
    - To share feelings, ideas, and interests

    Lead the participants through a review of the answers recorded on chart paper in step 3. Place each *Why?* response under the appropriate reason. For example:

    To get information
    Heard the weather report on the radio
    Learned how long to toast the waffles

    To share feelings, ideas, and interests
    Wrote a birthday card for a friend
    Talked with children about their activities

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[2] Adapted from Elaine Weitzman, *Learning Language and Loving It: A Guide to Promoting Children's Social and Language Development in Early Childhood Settings* (Toronto: The Hanen Centre, 1992), 46–47.

Discuss how adults use the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—to achieve goals. Ask participants to think of ways their use of language is affected by family and cultural practices and values. For example, some families encourage lively dinnertime conversations; others have quiet mealtime rituals. Encourage participants to continue improving their language skills so they can serve as effective models for young children. Share the ideas for building skills that are presented in the Next Steps section of this module.

5. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 1: How and Why Children Use Language Skills*. Ask participants to form small groups. Give participants 15 minutes to complete the assignment.

6. Lead a large group discussion about how and why children of different ages use language skills. Invite groups to share examples from their completed handouts. Cover the following key points:

   - Most newborn infants (birth to about 3 months) and young babies (from about 4 to 8 months) do not communicate intentionally. However, most adults interpret and respond to the babies' gestures and vocalizations as if the babies know they are communicating through their behaviors.

   - Older infants (from about 8 months) communicate with a goal in mind. They know they can make noises and use gestures such as pointing to get attention, show an adult something, or ask for something.

   - Toddlers and preschoolers use language skills for many reasons. They work hard to find out what words mean and how to use them. Their language skills support their cognitive and social development.

7. **Building Bridges with Families:** Distribute copies of *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing*. Suggest that participants discuss the strategies in the column titled *Adults Can* with children's parents. Together, staff and families can plan ways to support children's language development—in the home language and in English, as appropriate.

Activity 1–2: Emerging Literacy: Step by Step by Step

Purpose: In this activity, participants examine their own language skills, learn about the typical sequence of emerging literacy from infancy through the preschool years, and observe the literacy skills of a specific child.

Outcomes:

Participants support the ongoing, natural process of emerging literacy for all children, including those who are learning a second language and those with disabilities.

Participants analyze their own use of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills so they can serve as models for children.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 2: Emerging Literacy—An Ongoing Process
Handout 3: Observation Summary
Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing

1. Explain to participants that this activity focuses on emerging literacy, explores the ways adults use language skills, and reviews the language skills young children develop. If you plan to use other modules in the guide, explain that Modules 2, 3, and 4 each focus on specific language skills and how they are related to each other.

2. Use the Background Information for this module to present an overview of emerging literacy. Emphasize the following:

   - Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are interconnected and gained over time.

   - Young children develop and practice these skills simultaneously.

   - Each language skill supports and enhances the development of the others.

3. Ask participants to brainstorm a list of the ways they use listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to complete a typical task. For example, to shop for groceries, they might use language skills such as:

   - Reading newspaper ads
   - Writing a list
   - Reading coupons to find ones that match items on the list

- Asking for an item at the store and listening to the response
- Greeting a friend and holding a conversation

4. Use participants' lists to discuss how language skills are interconnected and how we all use language to accomplish different tasks at home, at work, and in the community. Ask participants to think of ways their use of language is affected by family and cultural practices and values. For example, in some families and cultures children learn to share their ideas and opinions without being asked, while in others children learn to listen quietly and wait until they are invited to join a conversation. Encourage participants to plan ways to enhance their own listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills so they can serve as effective models for young children. Share the ideas for building skills that are presented in the Next Steps section of this module.

5. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 2: Emerging Literacy—An Ongoing Process*. Ask participants to complete the entire handout so they can learn about the typical sequence of development from infancy through the preschool years. Ask participants to complete this task before the next coaching session.

6. Discuss participants' completed handouts. Point out how each language skill—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—supports the development of the others. Use the examples on participants' completed handouts to demonstrate the links between language and cognitive development and language and social competence.

7. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 3: Observation Summary*. Provide copies of *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing* so participants can use it as a resource. Ask participants to conduct several observations of a child during the next week. Suggest using this as an opportunity to involve a parent in observing his or her child. Ask participants to complete this assignment before you meet again.

8. Meet with participants to discuss their completed *Handout 3: Observation Summary*. Note what they learned about the child. Help participants make connections between the observed behaviors and skills and the child's emerging literacy.

9. **Building Bridges with Families:** Suggest that participants share with parents the strategies listed in the column titles *Adults Can* in *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing*. Together, staff and families can plan ways to encourage children's language development—in the home language and in English, as appropriate.

Activity 1–3: The Comforts of Home

Purpose: In this activity, participants recall the feelings evoked by early language-related memories, learn strategies that can be used in any setting to support children's language learning, and plan ways staff and families can collaborate to support language development.

Outcomes:

Participants support the ongoing, natural process of emerging literacy for all children, including those who are learning a second language and those with disabilities.

Participants collaborate with families to support children's language and literacy learning at home and in Head Start settings.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 4: Magical Memories
Handout 5: Encouraging Children's Language Development

Trainer Preparation Notes:

Parents are always welcome at Head Start staff training sessions; however, this workshop activity is specifically designed to involve Head Start parents and education staff in a joint session. This approach can be particularly helpful if more than one home language is represented among the families enrolled in the program. For more information, see *Appendix A: Responding to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Children and Families.* Share the ideas for building skills that are presented in the Next Steps section of this module.

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on the strategies that families and Head Start staff can use to encourage children's emerging literacy in various settings and situations.

2. Ask participants to form small groups of four or five people. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 4: Magical Memories.* Give participants 20 minutes to complete this assignment.

3. Invite the small groups to share their rhymes and songs with the whole group. Lead a discussion about the feelings, memories, and adjectives that these rhymes and songs bring to mind. Cover the following points in the discussion:

- Favorite rhymes, songs, and books are remembered long after children leave the preschool years. They continue to bring to mind feelings of love and security.

- Children first learn about language in the environment of their homes and families.

- The languages children learn at home are tied to their cultures' traditions, values, and attitudes.

- Children's first language connects them to their home, family, and culture.

- Children's home language includes more than talking; it is tied to thinking, feeling, and enjoying the company of others.

- The skills children use to learn their first language are also used to learn a second language.

- Parents and Head Start staff can help children retain their skills in their first language while helping them acquire English language skills.

- Being able to communicate in more than one language is an asset that children can use throughout their lives.

Trainer Preparation Notes:

If all participants attended the previous workshop in this module, you may want to skip the next step or offer a very brief review of emerging literacy.

4. Present a brief overview of emerging literacy. Explain that this concept includes four interconnected language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Emphasize that emerging literacy is an ongoing process that begins in infancy. Record on chart paper the following general strategies adults can use to support children's emerging literacy:

    - Listen to and talk with children
    - Read to children of all ages
    - Provide books and materials for children to explore
    - Model language skills for children

Ask participants for specific ideas for using each strategy. Record their suggestions on chart paper. Some examples of specific ideas include the following:

- **Listen to and talk with children of all ages**
  - *Introduce songs and rhymes*
  - *Play games such as peek-a-boo*
  - *Answer children's questions*
  - *Ask children open-ended questions*
  - *Point out the many examples of print at Head Start, home, and when away from home—for example, food packages, street signs, and bulletin boards*
- **Read to and with children of all ages**
  - *Read books at a regular time every day*
  - *Talk about the pictures and the story*
  - *Let children choose what to read and for how long*
  - *Read favorite books again and again*
  - *Read books with repetitive words and phrases that children can memorize*
- **Provide books and materials for children to explore**
  - *Books that match children's development, cultures, and interests*
  - *Paper and writing tools—for example, crayons, paint and brushes, markers*
  - *Chalkboard and chalk*
  - *Junk mail, coupons, catalogs, old magazines*
  - *Alphabet blocks, stamps, tiles, magnets, charts*

- **Model language skills for children**
  - — *Read and write where children see you*
  - — *Ask children to help you write a list or a letter to a friend*
  - — *Ask children to describe what they are doing*
  - — *Include children in conversations*
  - — *Describe what you are doing*
  - — *Listen carefully to children's stories*
  - — *Respond to children's communications—cries, babbles, gestures, and words*

Trainer Preparation Notes:

If there is time, you could lead participants in a discussion about strategies they have used to encourage their own children's language development and/or their childhood memories of times when they were encouraged to use language skills.

5. Have participants form small groups. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 5: Encouraging Children's Language Development*. Assign one or two situations to each group. Give participants 10 minutes to complete this assignment.

6. Ask each group to share its responses to the situations on *Handout 5: Encouraging Children's Language Development*. Lead a discussion highlighting how its responses are varied and how they are similar. Make the following points:

   - Many of the strategies adults can use to encourage children's language learning take no extra time. They are woven into the routines and activities of daily life.

   - Many of the strategies adults can use to encourage children's language learning require no special materials. Libraries have rich collections of children's books and tapes, offer services such as storytimes, and contain sections devoted to materials in different languages. Print is present all around us. Children enjoy using scrap paper, junk mail, catalogs, coupons, and so on.

- One of the most important things adults can do to encourage language learning is to listen to and talk with children. This lets children feel valued, helps them learn to express their ideas and feelings, teaches them how to actively participate in conversations, increases their vocabularies, and supports the development of thinking and social skills.
- No child is too young to be read to. Although a baby does not understand the words, she will learn to associate reading with being close to a person who loves and cares for her.
- There are opportunities to support listening, speaking, reading, and writing in many different settings—at home, on the bus, at Head Start, outdoors, at the park, at a health clinic, and so on.

7. **Building Bridges with Families:** Have parents and the Head Start staff who work with their children form small groups. Ask each small group to plan ways group members can work together to support children's emerging literacy at home and in Head Start settings.

Activity 1–4: Capturing the Memories

Purpose: In this activity, participants collaborate with a family to create a language album for their child.

Outcomes:

Participants support the ongoing, natural process of emerging literacy for all children, including those who are learning a second language and those with disabilities.

Participants collaborate with families to support children's language and literacy learning at home and in Head Start settings.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 6: Creating a Language Album
Appendix A: Responding to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Children and Families
Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders

Coach Preparation Notes:

A language album is similar to a portfolio, as discussed in the Head Start staff training guides *Observing and Recording: Tools for Decision Making* and *Individualizing: A Plan for Success*, in that it documents a child's progress and relevant characteristics and is used by staff and families as a planning tool. The language album could be a section of the child's portfolio. Generally, portfolios are maintained by Head Start staff, with contributions documenting the child's experiences at home and at Head Start. In this activity we suggest that families, rather than Head Start staff, take the lead in maintaining a child's language album because language learning is rooted in the home. Head Start staff can provide the information and materials families need to get started, offer support, make regular contributions, and meet often to discuss the contents and plan strategies for supporting the child's language learning.

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on how Head Start staff and families can collaborate to create language albums that record a child's emerging literacy and to plan strategies that support the child's language development at home and in Head Start settings.

2. Review with participants the crucial role families play in supporting their children's language development. Use the information in *Appendix A: Responding to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Children and Families* and *Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders* as appropriate. Discuss the following key points:

   - Encouraging children's language development in English and home languages is a natural part of most families' daily routines and activities.

   - Parents can encourage children's listening, speaking, reading, and writing at home, on the bus, outdoors, at the park, at a health clinic, at the barber shop, and so on.

- Families do not need special materials to encourage language learning. Scrap paper, junk mail, catalogs, coupons, and other items can be found in most homes. Libraries have books, tapes, resources, and activities like storytimes in English and other languages.

- When parents listen to and talk with children, the children learn about family and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions; gain cognitive and social skills; and benefit in many other ways. Children learn to:

  — Make sense of language
  — Become language users
  — Express their ideas and feelings appropriately
  — Become active, polite conversation partners

- Parents can read to a child of any age. Although a baby does not understand the words, she will learn to associate reading with being close to a person who loves and cares for her.

- When reading to children in English and home languages, parents do not have to read every word on the page. Talking about the pictures is a wonderful way to help children learn to love books and reading.

- Families are eyewitnesses to much of their children's language learning. Capturing these memories in a language album is fun and builds positive relationships between parents and children. The items included in an album provide concrete examples of how language develops. Recording a child's progress may motivate families to continue encouraging their children's language learning.

3. Explain to participants that a language album is a personal record of a child's growing language skills. Distribute *Handout 6: Creating a Language Album* and review Part I: Background Information. Brainstorm additional examples of what a family might include in the child's language album at different ages and stages of development.

4. Review the instructions on Part II of *Handout 6: Creating a Language Album*. Provide a container (for example, a large loose-leaf notebook, portable file box, or accordion file) and other materials the family can use to create a language album. Ask participants to complete this task before the next coaching session.

5. **Building Bridges with Families:** Meet with participants to discuss what happened when they involved a family in creating a language album. Have them make follow-up plans as described in Part III of *Handout 6: Creating a Language Album.*

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Participants can build on the skills developed through this guide by completing the following activities, independently or with other staff. Some of these activities can contribute to participants' professional portfolios. (See page 4 for a description of a professional portfolio.)

Encourage Family Literacy

Research the family literacy programs in your community: Who is the sponsor? What does the program offer? Where is it located? When are classes held? How do families enroll? Share what you learn with other staff and with parents. Hold a meeting, make an audiotape, engage in one-on-one conversations with literacy program staff, or invite a representative to make a presentation for the Head Start program.

Possible Portfolio Entry: The meeting agenda, audiotape script, or materials provided by the family literacy program representative

Retool and Reenergize Your Writing Skills

Start a journal to capture your thoughts and ideas or take a workshop or writing class at your local community college. Focus on creativity and/or the mechanics of writing—whatever is most interesting and useful for you.

Possible Portfolio Entry: Writing samples from your journal or class

Read for Fun and Information

Invite other interested staff members to form a book club. You can read and discuss whatever is interesting to the group. Choose your first book, then meet, discuss, share ideas, and enjoy being lifelong learners.

Possible Portfolio Entry: The book club's reading list

Turn off the Television

Make a commitment to turn off the television whenever you catch yourself watching something you are not really interested in. Instead of watching television, you could read a magazine article, organize a recipe file, write a poem, talk to a family member, or invite a neighbor to visit.

Possible Portfolio Entry: A journal entry about what you did and why it was preferable to watching television

Collaborate with the Disabilities Services Coordinator

Ask the disabilities services coordinator to observe the children's play and use of language skills. He or she can share the observation recordings with staff and help them review the environment, materials, and other program practices to determine whether changes are needed to support the emerging literacy of all children, including children with disabilities. This can serve as an opportunity for the disabilities services coordinator to ensure that goals from the child's IFSP/IEP (Individualized Family Service Plan/Individualized Education Program) are being addressed at Head Start, at home, and through support from specialists.

Possible Portfolio Entry: List of changes in program practices and observed outcomes.

Handout 1: How and Why Children Use Language Skills

Instructions: For each of the following reasons for using language, discuss and give examples of how children of different ages use listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing skills. Include additional reasons at the end of the handout if they come up in your discussions. An example is provided. You will have 15 minutes to complete this task.

To make a request:

Example:

An *infant* might raise her arms to be lifted
A *toddler* might point at a toy and say *mine*
A *preschooler* might say *Can I have* . . .

- An *infant* might . . .
- A *toddler* might . . .
- A *preschooler* might . . .

To complain about something:

- An *infant* might . . .
- A *toddler* might . . .
- A *preschooler* might . . .

To say *hello* or *goodbye*:

- An *infant* might . . .
- A *toddler* might . . .
- A *preschooler* might . . .

To respond to a communication:

- An *infant* might . . .
- A *toddler* might . . .
- A *preschooler* might . . .

Note: Use with Activity 1-1

Handout 1: How and Why Children Use Language Skills (Continued)

To get information:

- An *infant* might . . .
- A *toddler* might . . .
- A *preschooler* might . . .

To think, plan, and solve problems:

- An *infant* might . . .
- A *toddler* might . . .
- A *preschooler* might . . .

To share feelings, ideas, and interests:

- An *infant* might . . .
- A *toddler* might . . .
- A *preschooler* might . . .

Add your own reasons here:

- An *infant* might . . .

- A *toddler* might . . .

- A *preschooler* might . . .

Handout 2: Emerging Literacy—An Ongoing Process

Instructions: The lists below show examples of things most infants, toddlers, and preschoolers can do. Add your own examples at the end of each list. Think about how each skill supports emerging literacy. Record your answers in the second column. An example is provided for each age group. Complete this task before the next coaching session.

Some Things Infants Can Do	**How Does This Support Emerging Literacy?**
▪ Babble or coo when spoken to	*Infants learn about taking turns in conversations.*
▪ Smile at people	
▪ Play peek-a-boo	
▪ Use finger and thumb to pick up objects	
▪ Respond to own name and familiar words	
▪ Point to people and things	
▪ Explore books with all their senses	
▪ Enjoy looking at books with another person	
▪ Turn thick pages in cardboard books	
▪	
▪	
▪	

Some Things Toddlers Can Do	**How Does This Support Emerging Literacy?**
▪ Grasp crayons and markers in fist	*Toddlers learn to make marks on paper.*
▪ Look at picture books	
▪ Use a spoon and drink from a cup	
▪ Enjoy playing near other children	
▪ Follow simple directions	
▪ Name familiar people and objects	
▪ Listen to stories that use repetition	
▪ Speak in two- and three-word sentences	
▪	
▪	
▪	

Note: Use with Activity 1–2

Handout 2: Emerging Literacy—An Ongoing Process

(Continued)

Some Things Preschoolers Can Do	How Does This Support Emerging Literacy?
Make up silly words	*Preschoolers learn to love language.*
Imitate adult writing—scribble writing	
Look at books and retell familiar stories	
Talk with other children	
Talk about past and future events	
Take turns during conversations	
Solve their own disagreements	
Recognize familiar written words such as names	

Handout 3: Observation Summary

Instructions: During the next week, conduct several observations of a child, while focusing on skills and behaviors related to emerging literacy. Summarize your observations in the following format. Complete this task before your next coaching session.

Child:____________________________

Age:____________________________

Observation Dates:____________________

Observed Behaviors and Skills:	**Relationship to Emerging Literacy:**
Picks up and eats finger foods.	*Developing small muscles used to hold crayons or markers*

Note: Use with Activity 1–2

Handout 4: Magical Memories

Instructions: Take turns with the other members of your group and share a favorite nursery rhyme or song. It could be something you remember from your childhood or something you have taught your children. After each person has shared a rhyme or song, discuss the following questions. You will have 20 minutes to complete this assignment.

1. Where did you learn the rhyme or song? Did someone teach it to you?

2. What memories does this rhyme or song bring to mind?

3. What adjectives describe these feelings and memories?

4. Does anyone else in the group remember this rhyme or song?

Note: Use with Activity 1–3

Handout 5: Encouraging Children's Language Development

Instructions: As you read the brief descriptions assigned to your group, try to picture in your mind the setting and what the children and adults are doing. Then imagine what might happen next—what the adults could do to encourage the children's language development. Discuss your ideas with the other members of your group. You will have 10 minutes to complete this assignment.

Remember:

- Emerging literacy—learning to listen, speak, read, and write—is a gradual, ongoing process.
- Adults can do many things to support language development.

1. Eight-month-old Dontae sits in his high chair, watching his grandmother make pancakes for breakfast. *What could she do to encourage Dontae's language development?*

   Example: Sing to Dontae about what she's doing: I'm making pancakes—big, fat pancakes!

2. Ms. Torelli, an Early Head Start teacher, is helping two toddlers—Pamela and Vilma—get ready to go outdoors. Pamela's home language is English. Vilma's home language is Spanish. *What could Ms. Torelli do to encourage both toddlers' language development?*

3. Mrs. Washburn, a Head Start parent, is on the downtown bus with her two children—eighteen-month-old Kira and three-year-old Eric. They are going to the community health clinic. *What could Mrs. Washburn do to encourage her children's language development—while they are on the bus and when they get to the clinic?*

4. Four-year-old Frankie, a child with developmental delays, brings his favorite book to his dad and says, *Dad. Dad. Read me.* Frankie asks to hear this book every day—sometimes more than once. *What could Frankie's father do to encourage his son's language development?*

5. Wendell and Charlotte, four-year-olds at a group socialization session, are holding onto the same tricycle. Charlotte lets go and pushes Wendell. He pushes her back. A parent volunteer sees the children's disagreement. *What could the parent volunteer do to encourage the children's language development?*

6. The Chadwick family, two adults and four children—ten months, two-and-a-half years, six years, and ten years—are enjoying a picnic at their favorite park. *What could the adults and older children do to encourage the younger children's language development?*

Note: Use with Activity 1–3

Handout 6: Creating a Language Album

Part I: Background Information

What is a language album?

A language album is a collection of notes, photographs, tapes, and work samples that document a child's development and use of language skills. Staff and families can use it as a planning tool.

Who should be responsible for creating and maintaining a child's language album?

We suggest that families, rather than Head Start staff, take the lead in maintaining a child's language album because language learning is rooted in the home. Head Start staff can provide the information and materials families need to get started, offer support, and make regular contributions.

What might be included in a language album?

For an infant:

- Dated notes about her babbles (*11/8—stood in crib and said,* mamamama)
- The words to a favorite lullaby
- A photograph of her playing peek-a-boo with her big sister
- A list of favorite picture books
- A list of words she said at home and at Head Start

For a toddler:

- Examples of his scribbles
- Dated notes about his use of words and gestures (*3/23—pointed to door and said,* Out?)
- Dated notes about his understanding of language (*3/25—got shoes and brought them to Dad*)
- The words to a favorite song
- A list of favorite repetitive books

For a preschooler:

- Examples of her scribble writing
- A story she told, written down by a home visitor during a group socialization session
- A list of books she read with her grandad at home
- Photographs of make-believe play
- A sign made to protect an unfinished art project

Note: Use with Activity 1–4

Handout 6: Creating a Language Album (Continued)

Part II: Collaborating with a Family

Instructions: While completing this activity, record your experiences in a journal. You can take notes on what you, the family, and the child do. Complete this task before your next coaching session.

1. Invite a family to take part in this activity. Explain the purpose of creating a language album for the child. If the child is age four or older, you can involve the child in collecting and discussing examples of language learning.
2. Schedule a meeting with the family at a time and place that is convenient for them.
3. Collect some examples of the child's language learning from his or her Head Start experiences.
4. Meet with the family to:
   - Discuss the examples from Part I of this handout.
   - Share the examples you collected and discuss how they document language development.
   - Brainstorm with the family to develop a list of additional items to include in the language album.
   - Provide the container and materials and work together to organize the album.
5. Continue providing items the family can include in the language album.
6. Meet with the family (and child, if appropriate) again (in two to three weeks) to:
   - Review the contents of the language album.
   - Discuss what you and the family have been doing to encourage the child's language skills.
   - Ask family members to give you feedback on their experiences creating and using the language album. Would they like to continue maintaining the album? Would they recommend this activity to other families?

Part III: Follow-Up

Assess how effective this strategy is for collaborating with families to promote children's language learning. If appropriate, work with the family and other Head Start staff to plan and present a parent-staff workshop on creating language albums. Base the workshop on the lessons you learned while completing this activity.

From Cooing to Talking: Partners in Conversation

In this module, participants learn about the stages of language development (as described in Appendix C) that most young children pass through as they gain listening and speaking skills. Participants practice talking with and responding to children in ways that encourage their language learning.

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, the staff will be able to:

- Listen and respond to children and engage them in conversations as equal partners
- Enhance children's listening and speaking skills during routines, play times, and other daily activities at home and in Head Start settings
- Help children use language for different purposes—to express needs, describe feelings, make requests, tell stories, ask questions, solve problems, share ideas, make plans, and get along with peers
- Observe children's listening and speaking skills and identify signs of possible language delays or disorders that should be referred to speech and language specialists, with the family's permission

Key Concepts

- Infants develop listening and speaking skills when parents and teachers respond to their sounds, gestures, and actions.
- Children learn to use standard forms of language over time by watching, listening to, and conversing with adults and peers.
- Adults can help children gain listening and speaking skills by:
  - — Listening and responding to their nonverbal and verbal communications
  - — Using routines as opportunities to listen to and talk with children
  - — Engaging them as partners in meaningful conversations and valuing their ideas
  - — Accepting children's use of language and recognizing that grammatical mistakes are signs of language learning

- Families and Head Start staff should support children's home language skills and help children gain English language skills.

- Assessment of any child's language skills must be culturally and linguistically competent. It is crucial to identify a child's home language skills before diagnosing a language delay or disability.

Trainer/Coach Preparation Notes:

The primary goal of this module is to help participants improve their skills in listening to and talking with children. These skills support children's oral language development and encourage them to use oral language to accomplish various goals. The activities in this module are designed so that participants can *actively practice* listening and talking. As with the development of other skills—for example, observing or planning—trying out appropriate strategies for talking with children is more likely to build skills than simply reading or writing about those strategies. As you prepare to lead workshops and coaching sessions, think about how you can make the training atmosphere as supportive as possible so that even the most reluctant participants can practice listening and talking.

Some of the workshop and coaching activities include *role-plays*. You may find that some participants are eager to take part in the role-plays while others are not. It is helpful to have secluded places where participants can practice role-plays. Always give participants several options. They can develop skills by planning, observing, discussing, or assuming a role.

Background Information

Oral language (listening and speaking) involves receiving and understanding messages sent by other people and expressing our own feelings and ideas by using facial expressions, voice tones, gestures, and spoken words and sentences. Language is used every day in almost every situation—at home, on the job, and in our communities. People use language to transmit family and cultural values to their children and pass on their personal histories. Language supports social relationships and allows people to think and learn.

When you stop to think about everything involved in learning to understand and speak a language, the task seems impossible for anyone, let alone a child who enters the world with no previous skills or experience. Nevertheless, during the first few years of life, most children learn to understand and speak their home language. Children first learn to talk so they can establish relationships with their family members and communicate their needs and desires to others. Over time, children begin using language as a tool for thinking and learning. In addition to using language to tell stories and play with others, they use language to problem solve, get information, plan, predict, imagine, and make sense of the world.

Receptive and Expressive Language

Language includes receptive and expressive skills. *Receptive language* is the information a person acquires by hearing sounds and words and seeing facial expressions and gestures. Lip reading is a type of receptive language. *Expressive language* involves the nonverbal and verbal messages sent from one person to another. It includes crying, talking, tone of voice, body language, gestures, and facial expressions. *Expressive language* also includes formal systems of sign language, Braille, and assistive devices such as communication boards, computers, or eyeglass frames, used alone or in combination. Most children develop receptive language skills before they develop expressive language. For example, they can understand spoken words before learning to talk.

The Role of Adults

Although much of young children's language learning is self-directed, families and Head Start staff support the development of listening and speaking skills in several ways:

- **They model how language is used to communicate.** This helps children understand the meanings conveyed through facial expressions, body gestures, and voice tones; learn how to pronounce specific words; make sense of standard rules of grammar; enlarge their vocabularies; and use language to accomplish various goals.

- **They talk with children.** This encourages children to express their needs, feelings, ideas, stories, and imaginations. Children learn how to be conversation partners by taking turns, staying on the topic, and waiting until the speaker is finished. Children are encouraged to use their thinking skills to expand their understanding of the world.

- **They read to children.** This allows children to enjoy spending time with a favorite person and associate reading with these positive feelings. Children also begin to make discoveries about the connections between spoken and written words. They gradually come to understand that pictures and words are symbols that represent real things, feelings, actions, and ideas.

Trainer/Coach Preparation Notes:

Additional information on how and when children acquire oral language skills appears in the Background Information for Module 1, *Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders*, and *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing* which summarizes how children develop all forms of language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and describes what adults can do to support children of different ages. You can also consult the books and journal articles listed in the Resources section of this guide.

Activity 2–1: I'm Listening to You

Purpose: In this activity, participants review how and when children develop listening and speaking skills and practice responding to children in ways that support language learning.

Outcomes:

Participants listen and respond to children and engage them in conversations as equal partners.

Participants enhance children's listening and speaking skills during routines, play times, and other daily activities at home and in Head Start settings.

Participants help children use language for different purposes—to express needs, describe feelings, make requests, tell stories, ask questions, solve problems, share ideas, make plans, and get along with peers.

Participants observe children's listening and speaking skills and identify signs of possible language delays or disorders that should be referred to speech and language specialists, with the family's permission.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 7: Talking, Playing, Teaching, and Learning
Handout 8: Encouraging Children's Communication
Handout 9: Teaching Roles (for trainer only), index cards
Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders

Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing

Age-appropriate toys (for example, snap-lock beads; small, colored blocks; Legos; and/or beads and laces)

Trainer Preparation Notes:

This activity addresses the skills used to talk with and respond to children at different stages of language development as described in *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing*. You may want to cover all stages briefly and focus on those stages represented by the children enrolled in the participants' Head Start program. Note that the ages provided for each stage are approximate. As with other areas of development, a child's language learning follows an individual time clock and is greatly influenced by environment and experiences. Also point out that children who have a language delay or a language disorder or who are learning a second language may be at an earlier stage than others of the same age.

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on talking with and responding to children who are at different stages of language development in ways that encourage them to communicate.

2. Ask participants to form small groups and discuss the following question with the others in their group:

   What do Head Start staff and families learn about babies, toddlers, and/or preschoolers when they talk with them and respond to their communications?

   Ask each group to share their responses to this question. Use these responses, the Background Information in this module, *Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders*, and *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing* to provide an overview of the stages of language development and signs of speech or language delays or disorders.

3. Assign to each group one or more stages of language development as described in Appendix C. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 7: Talking, Playing, Teaching, and Learning*. Provide

Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders and *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing* as resources. Give participants 30 minutes to prepare their role-plays.

4. Discuss the meanings of *receptive* (understanding what is communicated) versus *expressive* (using words or signs to communicate) language skills. Have the small groups present their role-plays in order, beginning with Stage 1. After each role-play, summarize the characteristics of children at that stage and the adult actions that are most supportive. After all the role-plays have been completed, point out the adult actions that are appropriate for children at any stage. For example, an adult can read to a child of any age.

Trainer Preparation Notes:

For the next step, provide age-appropriate toys to serve as props for the role-plays. Select items typically used by children of the ages enrolled in the participants' Head Start programs.

5. Place the age-appropriate toys on a table at the front of the room. Distribute and review the instructions on *Handout 8: Encouraging Children's Communication*.

   Ask volunteers to carry out the first two-minute role-play: three to four children, three to four observers, and a teacher. Explain that the teacher might be a parent, another family member, a home visitor, or a classroom team member. Give the *teacher* the index card that describes the role he or she should assume. (See *Handout 9: Teaching Roles.*) Allow participants a few minutes to get into their roles. Then start the role-play.

   After the first role-play, ask the observers to describe what they saw and heard. Lead a discussion with the full group about the benefits and drawbacks of the teacher's interactions with the children.

   Ask the observers to switch roles with the children. Ask a new volunteer to play the role of *teacher*. Give the teacher an index card describing another role. Repeat these instructions until the first five role-plays have been completed.

6. Hold the sixth role-play. Lead a group discussion about how the teacher's interactions in this role-play encouraged the children to talk. Explain that there are times when teachers might need to use one of the

first five interaction styles when responding to a particular child or a specific situation. For example, if it suddenly starts raining, a teacher might assume the timekeeper role to quickly get her children inside. Point out, however, that the sixth style—the responder—is most likely to encourage children to communicate and is the style that families and Head Start staff should use most often.

7. Ask the small groups to discuss their own interactions with children.
   - *Which styles do they use?*
   - *Do they use one style more than the others?*
   - *How can they use the responsive style more often?*
   - *How can they encourage others (families and Head Start colleagues) to use the responsive style?*
8. Summarize the key points made in this session and answer participants' questions. Suggest that participants videotape their interactions with children, then view them to see which styles they use with different children and in different situations.
9. **Building Bridges with Families:** Suggest that participants use *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing, Handout 8: Encouraging Children's Communication*, and *Handout 9: Teaching Roles (for trainer only)* from this activity to plan a series of parent workshops on strategies that encourage children to develop and use language skills. You will have to provide a copy of Handout 9 to participants.

Activity 2–2: Talking and Listening Together

Purpose: In this activity, participants review how children develop listening and speaking skills, collect information about a child's language skills, and respond to the child in ways that support his or her language learning.

Outcomes:

Participants listen and respond to children and engage them in conversations as equal partners.

Participants enhance children's listening and speaking skills during routines, play times, and other daily activities at home and in Head Start settings.

Participants help children use language for different purposes—to express needs, describe feelings, make requests, tell stories, ask questions, solve problems, share ideas, make plans, and get along with peers.

Participants observe children's listening and speaking skills and identify signs of possible language delays or disorders that should be referred to speech and language specialists, with the family's permission.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 10: Observing Language Skills
Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders
Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing

Coach Preparation Notes:

This activity addresses the skills used to talk with and respond to children at the different stages of language development as described in the Background Information for this module. Participants can review the characteristics of all stages, then focus in-depth on the stages that match those of the children with whom they work. Note that the ages provided for each stage are approximate. As with other areas of development, a child's language learning follows an individual time clock and is greatly influenced by environment and experiences. Also point out that children who have a language delay or language disorder or who are learning a second language may be at an earlier stage than others of the same age.

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on recognizing the language skills typical of different stages of language development and on talking with and responding to children in ways that encourage them to communicate.

2. Use the Background Information for this module to lead a discussion about how children develop language skills. Ask participants to offer examples from their own experience to illustrate the following key points:

- Young children learn the sounds, words, sentence structure, conversation behaviors, and standard rules of grammar of their home language. *(Example: When babies babble, it sounds like the consonants and vowels of their home language.)*

- Young children learn the meaning of nonverbal and verbal communications. *(Example: A toddler understands his name and a few familiar words and knows the difference between a smile and a frown.)*

- Young children learn to convey meaning through verbal and nonverbal communications. *(Example: A baby looks at her mother, points to her stuffed animal, and looks at her mother again.)*

- Babies, toddlers, and preschoolers use language for different purposes. *(Example: Several preschoolers talk to each other about what they are going to play in the house corner.)*

- Children learn language from listening to and imitating adults. *(Example: A preschooler listens to a story and then retells it to himself.)*

- Children construct knowledge of language by applying what they know to new situations. *(Example: A preschooler refers to more than one man as* mans *instead of* men.*)*

3. Ask participants to describe some things they did recently to support children's development of listening and speaking skills. Group their responses in the following general categories:

   Model use of language *(Example: When a toddler asked me* Why? *questions, I responded with simple answers.)*

   Talk with and **respond to** children *(Example: While eating lunch with the children, I encouraged them to listen to and talk with each other.)*

   Read to children *(Example: I sat in the rocking chair with a baby and read a story out loud.)*

4. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 10: Observing Language Skills.* Provide *Appendix B: Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders* and

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Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing as resources. Ask participants to complete this task before the next coaching session.

5. Meet with participants to discuss the information they collected about a child and their responses to the questions on *Handout 10: Observing Language Skills.*

   Ask participants to try the strategies they listed at the end of the handout before the next coaching session. Participants can collaborate with families and other staff to implement these strategies and share information about the child's language learning.

6. Meet with participants to discuss what happened when they used these strategies to support the child's language learning. Encourage participants to continue collaborating with colleagues and children's families.

7. **Building Bridges with Families:** If the child has a language album, the information collected through this activity can be added to the album. If not, participants may want to collaborate with families to start a language album. (See Activity 1–4 in Module 1 for information about language albums.) Reinforce the important role that families play in supporting the development of a child's language skills.

Activity 2–3: Teaching Children to Play the Conversation Game

Purpose: In this activity, participants learn how to engage children in one-on-one conversations.

Outcomes:

Participants listen and respond to children and engage them in conversations as equal partners.

Participants enhance children's listening and speaking skills during routines, play times, and other daily activities at home and in Head Start settings.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape, index cards
Handout 11: Overcoming Challenges to Conversations
Appendix D: Playing the Conversation Game

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on the role of families and Head Start staff in helping children learn how to participate as equal partners in conversations with an adult or children.

Participants will identify and propose strategies for overcoming barriers that keep them from engaging children in conversations.

2. Write the following statement at the top of a piece of chart paper:

   How is learning to participate in a conversation like learning to play basketball?

   Ask participants to brainstorm answers to the question with others at the table. Allow about three minutes for the brainstorming.

   Here are some examples of responses that participants might come up with in their brainstorming:

   - *You can participate in a conversation or a basketball game from the beginning or join in once it's already started.*
   - *You can do both of them one-on-one or in groups.*
   - *They both have rules.*
   - *The rules may vary in different situations (for example, the practices of one family or culture versus those of others, and playground versus professional basketball).*
   - *You can learn by playing with more skilled players.*
   - *You learn gradually (in other words, you gain more complex skills over time).*
   - *They are both fun, social activities.*
   - *You have to learn not to talk too long and not to* hog *the ball.*
   - *Learning is more fun if there's no pressure to be right or to score.*

3. Have participants share their responses in round robin style. (The first group shares one response from its list, then the second group shares another response, and so on.) The groups continue to share without repeating a response until they run out of items.

4. Use *Appendix D: Playing the Conversation Game* and participants' responses to the brainstorming to discuss what adults can do to engage children of different ages in conversation. Ask participants to share examples of their conversations with children—What did the child do or say? How did the participant respond? What happened next?

Cover the following key points:

- Babies begin learning about taking turns in conversations when their families and other people respond to their sounds and gestures, play games with them, and sing songs with them.
- Children can use sounds and gestures to take turns in conversations before they learn to talk.
- Adults provide a lot of support when children are learning about conversation. Over time, children become more active and equal conversation partners and need less and less support from adults.
- Children use conversation skills to talk with adults, with another child, and in small groups.
- Conversations are opportunities to share information and enjoy other people's company.
- Children are more likely to talk when they have something to talk about (for example, what happened on a walk around the neighborhood or the characteristics of an unusual object).
- Engaging children in conversations is one of the most effective ways of supporting oral language development.

5. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 11: Overcoming Challenges to Conversations*. Ask half of the groups to focus on the first description, and the other half to focus on the second description. Give participants 20 minutes to complete this assignment.

6. Have the groups that focused on the first description take turns sharing their solutions and rewrites. Repeat the sharing process with the groups that focused on the second description.

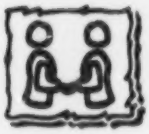
7. Ask participants to continue working in their small groups. Give each group some index cards. Ask participants to discuss the challenges that limit their conversations with children (for example, a child does not respond, there are too many other things to do). Have them select two or three challenges that are most problematic and describe each one on an index card. Collect the cards. Give participants 10 minutes to complete this assignment.

8. Redistribute the cards to other groups. Have the small groups discuss the challenges listed on the index cards and propose strategies for overcoming them. Give participants 10 minutes to complete this assignment.

9. Have the small groups share the challenges and proposed strategies with the full group. Discuss how to implement these strategies. Ask participants to choose at least one strategy to implement in their work with children. Provide copies of *Appendix D: Playing the Conversation Game* for participants to use as a resource.

10. **Building Bridges with Families:** Suggest that participants write brief notes to families to let them know what their children like to talk about at Head Start. The notes can encourage families to talk with and listen to their children every day and give some examples of the kinds of things families might learn about their children: how they think, what they think about, how they use their imaginations, who they like to play with, and what they like to do at Head Start.

Activity 2–4: Won't You Be My Conversation Partner?



Purpose: In this activity, participants engage a focus child in conversations as an equal partner.

Outcomes:

Participants listen and respond to children and engage them in conversations as equal partners.

Participants enhance children's listening and speaking skills during routines, play times, and other daily activities at home and in Head Start settings.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 12: Practicing the Conversation Game
Appendix D: Playing the Conversation Game

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on the role of families and Head Start staff in helping children participate as equal partners in conversations with an adult or other children. Participants will identify and overcome challenges that keep them from engaging children in conversations and practice starting and continuing conversations with a focus child.

2. Discuss the following questions with participants:

   - *How are conversations like games?*
   - *How do you learn to play a game?*
   - *What are the rules of the Conversation Game?*

- *Are the rules the same in all cultures, languages, families, or situations? How are they the same? How are they different?*

- *What are some of the challenges that limit your conversations with children? (For example, a child does not respond, there are too many other things to do.)*

- *What can you do to overcome the challenges that keep you from engaging children in conversation?*

Encourage participants to implement their proposed strategies for overcoming these challenges.

3. Review the information that is most relevant to participants from *Appendix D: Playing the Conversation Game*. (For example, focus on the strategies for engaging children in conversation that are appropriate for the age groups with which participants work.)

4. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 12: Practicing the Conversation Game*. Ask participants to complete this task during the next week.

5. Meet with participants to discuss their experiences engaging the focus child in conversations. Ask the participants to describe what they did and said, what the child did and said, what they learned, what they shared with the child's family, and how they plan to use what they learned.

6. Provide copies of *Appendix D: Playing the Conversation Game* for participants to use as a resource.

7. **Building Bridges with Families:** Suggest that participants use the format on *Handout 12: Practicing the Conversation Game* to continue their interactions with children, share this information with families, and jointly plan strategies for engaging children in conversations at home and at Head Start. They can provide copies of the handout so families can keep track of the conversations children engage in at home.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Participants can build on the skills developed through this module by completing the following activities, independently or with other staff. Some of the activities can contribute to participants' professional portfolios. (See page 4 for a description of a professional portfolio.)

Talk about Talking

Plan a series of interactive workshops for parents and Head Start staff to discuss ways to encourage all children's language development. Invite guest facilitators to share information and ideas:

- A speech and language specialist could describe the characteristics of language delays and language disorders and explain different responses to each.
- A specialist on second language learning could offer tips on supporting children who are developing skills in two languages at the same time.
- The disabilities services coordinator could suggest strategies for engaging children with disabilities in one-on-one conversations and helping them get involved in group play so they can talk with other children.

Include follow-up activities that encourage participants to listen to and talk with children.

Possible Portfolio Entry: Workshop agendas and handouts

Become a Film Critic

Ask parents for permission to videotape the interactions between Head Start staff and children. Staff can review the tapes to see:

- Who does most of the talking
- How children respond to the staff's smiles, gestures, comments, and questions
- How staff respond to children's smiles, gestures, comments, and questions

Staff can plan ways to encourage children to be active, equal conversation partners and videotape the children again to see how they respond to these new strategies.

Possible Portfolio Entry: Videotape transcripts—what staff and children did and said

Encourage Alternatives to Television

Sponsor a weekly *Turn Off the Television Day*, when all Head Start families and staff do other things at home or in the community instead of watching television. Prepare a calendar that offers suggested alternative activities for each *Turn Off* day. For example, instead of watching television families can tell stories, bake muffins, take a walk, listen to music, teach each other a dance, play games, or make a kite. Offer a monthly family play evening at the Head Start center. Provide a simple meal—soup, bread, and carrot sticks—then introduce a game, song, dance, or activity that families can enjoy at Head Start and at home.

Possible Portfolio Entry: The *Turn Off the Television Day* calendar

Learn about the Results of Brain Research

Recent research on the development of the brain has shown that a child's interactions and experiences in the first few years of life have a large impact on overall development, including acquisition of language skills. Use the following resources to learn more about the results of brain research:

Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Starting Points*, Carnegie Corporation of New York, New York, N.Y., 1994.

Nash, J. Madeline, "Fertile Minds," *Time*, New York, N.Y., February 3, 1997.

Special Edition, "Your Child," *Newsweek*, New York, N.Y., Spring/Summer, 1997.

Web Sites:

Neuroscience Resources:
http://weber.u.washington.edu/%7Echudler/books.html

Brain Pages:
http://www.napanet.net/%7Ejamesj/brnpg.htm

All You Ever Wanted to Know about the Brain:
http://www.athanet.net/%7Efry/brain.shtml

The Brain Tainment Center:
http://www.world.brain.com/index.cgi/UN/bbintro.html

A Parent's Guide to Early Brain Development:
http://www.iamyourchild.org/docs/brain-facts-intro.html

Possible Portfolio Entry: List of strategies the Head Start program can use in response to what is known about the development of the brain and language capabilities

Handout 7: Talking, Playing, Teaching, and Learning

Instructions: Your group was assigned one or more of the stages of language development as described in Appendix C. Your task is to teach the participants in the other groups how to talk with and respond to a child at this stage. To accomplish this task, complete the following steps. You will have 30 minutes to complete steps 1 through 5.

Talking

1. Choose a member of your group to serve as the facilitator.
2. Read about the stage assigned to your group.
3. Discuss this stage with the other members of the group—what children do and what families and Head Start staff can do to support language learning.

Playing

4. Plan a role-play to teach the other participants about this stage, including:
    - The nonverbal and verbal communications of a child
    - How families and Head Start staff can talk with and respond to the child
5. Practice the role-play.

Teaching

6. Present your role-play to the other participants.

Learning

7. Enjoy watching and learning from the role-plays of other groups.

Note: Use with Activity 2–1

Handout 8: Encouraging Children's Communication

Instructions: In this activity, you will have a chance to participate in, observe, and discuss several role-plays that show teachers assuming different roles in their interactions with children. Read the descriptions of each role—children, observers, teacher.

Each role-play lasts about two minutes. After each one, the observers describe what they saw and heard. The trainer leads a large group discussion.

Then the children and the observers switch roles, and a new participant plays the role of teacher.

Children (three or four per role-play)

Play with the toys on the table. Talk to each other about what you are doing and anything else that comes to mind. Use language to make requests, express feelings, share, negotiate, compromise, and so on. Also talk to and respond to the teacher.

Observers (three or four per role-play)

Move your chairs close to the play table so you can easily see and hear the children and teacher. Take notes about what you see and hear. After the role-play is over, share your observations with the rest of the group.

Teachers (one per role-play)

Read the description of the teaching role described on the index card. As the children play, carry out your role.

Note: Use with Activity 2–1

Handout 9: Teaching Roles (for trainer only)[*]

Instructions: This handout provides descriptions of six roles that teachers and other adults play when interacting with children. Copy the descriptions for each role on a separate index card. Give an index card to each participant who is assuming the role of teacher.

1. Director:	Tell the children what to do, make suggestions, and ask lots of questions. For example: *Put all the red blocks over here. Make a pattern with the blocks—red, blue, yellow, red, blue, yellow. Can you show me four blocks?*
2. Entertainer:	Join in with the children. Sit down with them and talk about what you're doing. Keep talking so that the children cannot talk. For example: *These blocks are so much fun. I'm going to make a train with my blocks. Trains are fun, too. They go* choo, choo. *We saw a train yesterday, didn't we? It was big and made lots of noise.*
3. Timekeeper:	Rush through the activity so you can stay on schedule. Do not stop to listen to anyone. For example: *Okay, children, we have only a few minutes to play with these toys. Get started now because we'll have to clean up soon.*
4. Silent Watcher:	Sit with the children but do not talk to them, even if they ask you questions or seek your attention.
5. Rescuer:	Assume that the children cannot speak for themselves. Step in repeatedly to offer help or do things for them. For example: *You don't have enough blocks to play with. Let me give you some more. I'll show you how to make a pretty pattern with them. Did she take your blocks? Here, I'll get them back for you.*
6. Responder:	Watch, listen, and learn what each child wants to do or what he or she needs. Respond in ways that allow individual children to talk with you and with each other. For example: *Tracey, tell me about your building. Jan, you and Drew made similar designs with your blocks.*

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[*] Based on Elaine Weitzman, *Learning Language and Loving It: A Guide to Promoting Children's Social and Language Development in Early Childhood Settings* (Toronto: The Hanen Centre, 1992), 15–17.

Note: Use with Activity 2–1

Handout 10: Observing Language Skills

Part I: Watching and Listening to a Child's Language

Instructions: Select a child to be the focus of this activity. You might want to choose a child who has a language delay or disorder or one who is learning a second language. Record background information about the focus child. During the next week, use strategies such as those listed below to collect as much information as you can about this child's language skills. Complete Part I before your next coaching session.

Child:________________________ **Dates:**______________________________

Age:__________________________ **Home Language**:______________________

- Conduct observations of the child alone and during interactions with peers, family members, and/or Head Start staff.
- Make anecdotal recordings of the child's nonverbal and verbal communications.
- Make video and/or audiotape recordings of the child's use of language (for example, cooing, babbling, talking to self, interacting with adults and/or peers).
- Photograph the child at play or during routines or activities and write a brief explanation of what the child said and did.
- Take notes during or after conversations with the child's family about his or her use of language at home.
- Take notes during or after conversations with Head Start staff about the child's use of language at the program.

Note: Use with Activity 2–2

Handout 10: Observing Language Skills (Continued)

Part II: What Do You Understand? What Can You Tell Me?

Instructions: Use the information you have collected about the child's language skills and *Appendix C: Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing* to answer the following questions. Record your answers on a piece of blank paper or in a journal. Complete Part II before your next coaching session.

Does this child understand verbal and nonverbal language? How do you know?

How does this child communicate his/her needs?

How does this child make requests?

How does this child communicate without words (smiles, gestures, pointing, body language)?

How does this child communicate with words (single words, two-word sentences, conversations)?

What are examples of the child's receptive language (listens to and follows directions)?

What are examples of the child's expressive language (reports on an event or experience clearly and in sequence)?

What strategies can Head Start staff and the child's family use to support the child's language skills?

Handout 11: Overcoming Challenges to Conversations

Instructions: Read and discuss both of the following descriptions of interactions between children and adults. Then focus on the description assigned to your group. Identify the challenges that limit adults' conversations with the children and suggest solutions. Rewrite the interaction so the adults respond to the children and engage them in conversation. Share your solutions and rewrites with the other groups. You will have 20 minutes to complete this assignment.

Part I. Washing the Paintbrushes

Setting: In a Head Start FCC home, Julia (four years) and Roberto (three-and-a-half years) offer to help their FCC provider, Ms. B., wash the paintbrushes.

What Happened:

Julia: *Can I help?*

Roberto: *Me, too?*

Ms. B.: *Not today. Last time you got water all over the floor.*

Julia: *We didn't mean to. We want to help.*

Roberto: *Yeah.*

Ms. B.: *I said, not today. Maybe tomorrow.*

Roberto: *We'll keep the water in the sink.*

Ms. B.: (Ms. B. turns and looks around the kitchen.) *There's lots of other things to pick up. Go pick up the dress-up clothes and pots and pans. You were both playing with them.*

Julia: *Yeah, we had fun. I was the mom, and Roberto was the dad.*

Roberto: *I was a good dad. I cooked the dinner.*

Ms. B.: *Go pick up. I don't need your help with the brushes.*

Julia: *Maybe tomorrow?*

Ms. B.: *Okay. Maybe tomorrow.*

Note: Use with Activity 2–3

Handout 11: Overcoming Challenges to Conversations (Continued)

Part II. Chicken Pox, Oatmeal, and Trucks

Setting: Ms. J. is conducting a home visit with Mrs. F. Her sons Lannie (thirty-two months) and Bernard (four-and-a-half years) are playing with some small trucks.

What happened:

Ms. J.: *It looks like Lannie's chicken pox are gone. Did they last as long as Bernard's?*

Lannie: *Pox.*

Bernard: *Poxy. Poxy. Poxy.*

Mrs. F.: *No, not so long. But he sure was cranky. He cried and scratched all day.*

Ms. J.: *Did it help to give him an oatmeal bath like I showed you last time we met?*

Lannie: *O-meal?*

Bernard: *Oatmeal in the bath? Yuck. Did he eat it?*

Mrs. F.: *Yes, it helped him relax.*

Bernard: *I had chicken pox, too.*

Ms. J.: *So, tell me about your GED class.*

Bernard: *I got a new truck.* (Bernard shows the truck to Ms. J.)

Mrs. F: *Bernard, go sit down.*

Ms. J: *That's nice, Bernard.*

Bernard: *Vroom, vroom.*

Lannie: *Vroom, vroom.*

Bernard: *Stop copying me.*

Lannie: *Vroom, vroom.* (Bernard pushes Lannie and Lannie starts crying.)

Mrs. F.: *Stop fighting.* (Mrs. F. turns to Ms. J.) *These two are always bickering.*

Ms. J.: *Well, that's just how kids are, I guess. Now, try again to tell me about your GED class.*

Handout 12: Practicing the Conversation Game

Instructions: Choose a child to engage in conversations during routines, play times, and activities throughout the next week. You may want to focus on a child who has a language delay or disorder or one who is learning a second language. Record what happens on the following form. Make as many copies as needed to record your conversations with this child.

Child:____________________ **Age:**________________

Why did you choose this child?

Setting (time, place, other children, and/or adults present):

1. Who started the conversation? What did you or the child do or say?

2. What happened next?

3. What was the verbal and/or nonverbal response? (Repeat items 2 and 3 as often as needed to complete your description of the conversation.)

4. How did the conversation end?

Note: Use with Activity 2–4

Handout 12: Practicing the Conversation Game (Continued)

5. What did you learn about the child during this conversation?

6. What conversational skills did the child use?

- ☐ Looked at the speaker
- ☐ Listened to the speaker
- ☐ Took his or her turn at the appropriate time
- ☐ Let the other person take a turn
- ☐ Continued the conversation by taking more turns (nonverbal or verbal)
- ☐ Started or joined a conversation
- ☐ Waited until the speaker was finished before responding
- ☐ Added information related to what the previous speaker said
- ☐ Asked questions to clarify what the speaker said
- ☐ Stuck to the topic being discussed
- ☐ Took a short turn so someone else could speak
- ☐ Let the other speaker(s) know when he or she was leaving the conversation

7. What information did you share with the child's family?

8. How will you use what you learned about the child?

Module 3

The Magic World of Reading: Opening Doors for Children

In this module, participants learn to choose a variety of books that are appropriate for young children, select books for individual children, and read aloud to children one-on-one and in small groups.

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, the staff will be able to:

- Encourage children to develop a love of reading
- Select books that reflect children's interests, skills, abilities, cultures, and families
- Read aloud to children one-on-one and in small groups
- Plan follow-up activities and experiences and offer props that enhance children's enjoyment and understanding of books
- Collaborate with families to ensure that every child has access to books at home and has a regular time for reading

Key Concepts

- All adults, regardless of their reading skills, can share books with children.
- When read to from infancy, children learn to associate reading with warm, caring feelings. Although the reading techniques and book selections vary according to children's developmental stages, a child can be read to at any age.
- Young children who are read to frequently and regularly are likely to master conventional reading in the early elementary years and have successful learning experiences in school.
- Young children enjoy books with repetition and rhyme. When children hear these books again and again, they memorize the words, join in the reading, and predict what happens next. They pretend to read books to themselves, which is an important step in learning conventional reading.
- Many types of books are appropriate for young children. When choosing books for young children, it is important to individualize by considering the children's:

- Home languages
- Family and life experiences
- Cultures
- Skills
- Interests
- Background knowledge

- Staff can enhance children's enjoyment and understanding of a book's characters and plot by:
  - Providing props children can use to act out the story
  - Planning activities and experiences tied to the book's themes and characters
  - Creating an appealing library area where children can explore the book on their own

Background Information

Reading is more than pronouncing the words correctly; the reader has to take meaning from the words. A competent reader can pronounce the words on a page, understand what they mean, and get information from them. Reading is the key to learning and a tool we use throughout our lives.

For many years, parents and educators believed that reading and writing were difficult skills that children would be ready to learn only at a certain point in time and no sooner. Early childhood programs offered materials and activities designed to help children gain prereading skills so they would be *ready* to begin the process of learning to read and write.

Emerging Literacy

Researchers who have studied children's literacy development now believe that children begin learning about language—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—very early in life. The *reading readiness* approach has been replaced with *emerging literacy*, a theory that describes literacy development as a gradual, ongoing process that takes place over time. Emerging literacy views oral language, reading, and writing as interconnected parts of literacy development. Each of these language skills supports the development and use of the others.

How Young Children Learn

Young children learn about reading and writing in the same way they learn about other things. They watch and imitate adults, they explore materials, and they make their own discoveries about how written language works. Through trial and error, problem solving, and forming and testing hypotheses, they learn about written language. For example, children learn from experiences with materials and other people that:

- Drawing and writing are different.
- Words are symbols for real things, feelings, and actions.
- Writing is talk written down.
- We read the words in books, not the pictures.

Children who understand that spoken language is made up of discrete sounds—phonemes and syllables—find it easier to learn to read. Phonemes are the smallest units of sound that make up the syllables and words of a language. Research has shown that phonemic awareness—the ability to associate specific sounds with specific letters and letter combinations—is one of the best predictors of success in learning to read.

Most children develop phonemic awareness naturally, over time. They play with words by changing the first letter, make up rhymes, and invent new words. Head Start staff/FCC providers and families can encourage the development of phonemic awareness by listening and talking to children, encouraging them to talk with each other, singing songs, and reciting poems and rhymes. Frequent read-aloud sessions featuring familiar and favorite books can also help children develop phonemic awareness.

Although much of children's literacy learning is self-directed, adults play an important role. They serve as models for reading and writing, choose books that are individually and developmentally appropriate, read aloud and talk about the stories, make books available so children can look at them on their own, provide writing materials, and ask children about their written work.

Choosing Books

There are many excellent books for young children. (See *Appendix E: Books for Young Children* for descriptions of different categories of books for young children and *Appendix F: Choosing Books with Diverse Characters and Themes for Young Children* for a guide to selecting books that depict cultures, abilities, and families in positive ways.) Choosing books with the characteristics of individual children in mind is an excellent strategy for individualizing the program. Staff and families can look for books that:

- Depict cultures, abilities, genders, and families in positive ways
- Are written in English and the children's home languages
- Present typical daily life experiences
- Match children's skills
- Offer new challenges
- Address fears and challenges faced by children

- Deal with changes in family life such as moving to a new home
- Build on children's interests
- Include rhyme, repetition, and predictability
- Reinforce or introduce concepts and ideas such as opposites or insects

Some books do not enhance children's learning. For example, most books featuring toys or characters that originated in movies and television shows do not use rich, interesting language that stimulates imaginations and creativity. The children's librarian at the local library can recommend notable authors, illustrators, and books. Families and Head Start staff can discuss the characteristics of individual children with the librarian and ask for recommendations of books that would appeal to specific children.

Each year, several children's books receive awards for their high quality, including the Caldecott Medal and the Coretta Scott King Award. Many libraries publish lists of current and past award-winning books and books that were nominated for awards. The American Library Association and the Library of Congress publish book lists that should be available at the local library. Professional journals such as *The Horn Book*, *Book List*, and *Young Children* publish reviews of children's books. (See *Appendix F: Choosing Books with Diverse Characters and Themes for Young Children* and *Appendix G: Getting to Know Children's Literature* for more information on choosing children's books.)

Reading Aloud

Reading aloud to children every day, beginning in infancy and continuing into the elementary school years, fosters literacy development. Children who are read to from infancy associate reading with the pleasant, warm feelings they had while sitting in a favorite person's lap, looking at books together, and hearing his or her voice. They learn that their family values reading as an important part of their lives. One sign that children enjoy being read to is that they ask for more.

Reading aloud can take place at home and at Head Start, one-on-one and in small group sessions. Parents, grandparents, older siblings, neighbors, and Head Start staff can read aloud to children. Guest readers—the program director, a librarian, a parent, a police officer—can visit the program to share their favorite books with children.

Successful read-aloud sessions involve much more than saying words and turning pages. Children take meaning from the words and expand their understanding and enjoyment of the story when adults encourage them to talk about the characters, setting, and plot and relate them to their own lives. Adults can express their own enjoyment of the story and characters. Children and adults can look at the pictures together, examine the details, and discuss what they like and dislike.

Children often want to read their favorite books again and again. Although adults may tire of the same book, these repeated readings help children listen to the story and understand the meaning of the words used to describe the characters and setting. Children may begin using words and phrases from the book during conversations with others.

Reading aloud supports children's emerging literacy in many ways:

- Children add new words to their vocabularies.
- They understand more spoken words.
- They learn how to handle books so they will not get damaged.
- They compare and connect their own experiences to those of characters in books.
- They are motivated to look at books on their own and, over time, begin conventional reading.
- They discover the connections between spoken and written words—you can speak words, read words on paper, and write words on paper.
- They learn about the world and are encouraged to use their imaginations.
- They understand that spoken language is made up of discrete sounds.
- They notice how the words and sentence structure in written language differ from those in spoken language.
- They begin to connect the sounds of words being read out loud to the words written on the page.
- They begin to explore writing and read their own writing to others.

Emergent Reading

Children who are read to often are likely to pretend to read to themselves, just as they pretend to do other things they have experienced with adults. A baby may pick up a cardboard book—upside-down perhaps—and turn the thick pages while babbling to herself. A toddler might make up a story while looking at a wordless picture book or retell a favorite story that has lots of repetition and a predictable plot.

At home and at Head Start, many preschool children engage in emergent reading—looking at familiar books on their own and retelling the story in their own words to themselves or others. Through emergent reading, children practice the reading behaviors they have experienced during one-on-one or group reading sessions with their families and teachers. They hold the book upright and turn the pages. They get clues from the pictures, and tell the story in the correct sequence, using words that are similar to but not exactly the same as the written text. What makes emergent reading significant is that children are not simply remembering the words in the book. By telling the story in their own words, they are demonstrating that they understand the sequence and meaning of the story.

Sharing Books without Reading the Words

In some families, the adults do not read aloud to children because they cannot read or feel that their reading skills are so limited that the read-aloud experience will be frustrating and unpleasant. Head Start grantees and delegate agencies must provide family literacy services directly or through referrals to other agencies. Many programs form linkages with their communities' family literacy projects. In addition, staff can use strategies such as the following to show families how to share books with their children without reading the words.

Model how to look at and talk about a wordless picture book. Ask the child to make up a story to go with the pictures. Ask questions about the pictures such as:

What do you see?
What are the characters doing?
How do you think the characters are feeling?
What do you think will happen next?
What do you think characters are saying?
Could this happen in real life?
What would you do if you were the . . . ?

Model how to look at books and talk about the pictures. Tell the story in your own words. Let families know that they do not have to read every word on the page to help their children learn that books are important. Talking about books lets children know that their families think books are valuable.

Create a lending library so children take home a few of their favorite books from Head Start. Children can share these favorites with their families. Or write down the titles and authors of a child's favorite books and suggest that the family borrow these books from the library.

Include books on tape in your lending library or suggest that families borrow them from your local library. Explain to families that they can listen to a tape while looking at the book with their children. After the tape is over, families can talk with their children about the story and characters, draw pictures, or listen to the story again.

Encourage families to tell stories to their children. This is an opportunity to pass on a family's history, reinforce cultural values and beliefs, or create imaginary characters and situations.

Making Books Available

In addition to reading aloud, families and Head Start staff can encourage emergent reading by making books available throughout the home or classroom. At home, children can look at books in any room and outdoors. At Head Start, children can read in the library area, in the interest areas, and outdoors. For example, the house corner can include cookbooks, books to read to babies, and books and magazines. The block area might offer books about construction, bridges, and castles. The art area can include books about different forms and styles of art—sculpture, photography, and abstract paintings.

Families and Head Start staff can provide books for children to read when away from their home or classroom. Children can look at books while riding on the bus, waiting to use the bathroom, waiting at the health clinic, and visiting the park. (See the Next Steps section of this module for information on groups that help Head Start give away books to children.)

Creating Literacy-Rich Environments

Young children are exposed to oral and written language at home, in the community, and in child development settings such as Head Start. Children see print on signs and bulletin boards, on food packages, and in newspapers and magazines. They play with alphabet blocks, puzzles, and magnets and draw and write with crayons and markers. Children as young as age two can take meaning from signs, labels, and logos at home and in the community. They recognize words as symbols for a favorite restaurant, drink, or brand of sneakers. Families and Head Start staff can make sure that children notice the print around them, see how adults use reading and writing to accomplish goals, and have many opportunities to look at books, use writing and drawing materials, and incorporate reading and writing in their play.

Module 3

Trainer/Coach Preparation Notes:

This module focuses on choosing books that are developmentally appropriate and that respond to the characteristics of individual children and on reading aloud to children one-on-one and in small groups. The next module focuses on the ways families and Head Start staff create literacy-rich environments that support children's language learning. The activities in both modules address the skills used to support preschool children's emerging literacy. Information on reading with infants and toddlers is included in *Appendix H: Reading with Babies and Toddlers*. Trainers can use this appendix to adapt the activities for participants who work with younger age groups.

Activity 3–1: What Makes a Good Book Good?

Purpose: In this activity, participants define reading, learn about emerging literacy, discuss individually and developmentally appropriate books for young children, and plan ways to use their local library as a resource for families, classrooms, FCC homes, and group socialization sessions.

Outcomes:

Participants encourage children to develop a love of reading.

Participants select books that reflect children's interests, skills, abilities, cultures, and families.

Participants collaborate with families to ensure that every child has access to books at home and has a regular time for reading.

Trainer Preparation Notes:

You may want to ask a children's librarian at the local library to assist you in planning and leading this workshop.

Some additional preparation is necessary for the following steps:

Step 3: Put together a collection of pictures and photographs of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers looking at books. You will need one picture per table of participants. You can find pictures in magazines and catalogs or take photographs of children in home and center settings. If you plan to use the pictures again, mount each one on cardboard and cover it with clear adhesive paper.

Step 4: When participants sign up for this workshop, ask them to bring a children's book that they would recommend to others who work with preschoolers. If this is not possible, bring enough children's books with you so each participant will have one.

Step 8: Collect pamphlets, brochures, book lists, and other materials about the early childhood services offered by the local library.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape, index cards
Handout 13: What Makes a Good Book Good?
Appendix E: Books for Young Children
Appendix F: Choosing Books with Diverse Characters and Themes for Young Children
Appendix: G: Getting to Know Children's Literature
Pictures or photographs of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers looking at books
Children's books (one for each participant)
Pamphlets, brochures, book lists, and other materials about the early childhood services offered by the local library (one set for each participant)

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on choosing books that are developmentally appropriate for young children and reflect the characteristics of individual children. Participants will define reading, learn about emerging literacy, discuss what makes a book good for young children, and plan ways to use their local library as a resource for encouraging young children's language learning.

Trainer Preparation Note:

If participants in this workshop work with children of different ages you might want them to form groups by age group (all those who work with toddlers form a group) or form groups that represent a range of ages.

2. Place a stack of index cards on each table. Ask participants to write a definition of the word *reading* on an index card. Have them discuss their definitions with others at their table. Ask each table to agree on a single definition. Give participants 10 minutes to complete this assignment.

3. Ask each group to share their definition with the full group. If necessary, point out that reading is more than pronouncing words. It is the ability to take meaning from the printed words on a page.

   Use the Background Information for this module to provide an overview of emerging literacy and the strategies that families and Head Start staff can use to support children's language learning.

4. Give each table one of the pictures showing a baby, toddler, or preschooler with a book. Ask participants to discuss what they think the child in the picture is doing and how it is related to reading. Give participants 10 minutes to complete this assignment.

5. Have each group describe a reading behavior demonstrated in the picture. For example, the pictures may show behaviors such as the following:

   - Chewing on a book
   - Holding a book right-side up
   - Sharing a book with another person
   - Pointing to the pictures
   - Naming familiar objects in the pictures
   - Retelling the story to himself or herself
   - Getting excited about something in the book

   Point out that these behaviors contribute to a child's emerging literacy. Lead into the next step of this activity by discussing the importance of choosing quality books that appeal to young children.

Trainer Preparation Notes:

If participants did not bring children's books with them, distribute the books you are providing for this activity. Allow participants several minutes to read their book.

6. Have participants work in small groups of four or five persons to share and discuss their children's books. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 13: What Makes a Good Book Good?* Give participants 45 minutes to complete this assignment.

7. Ask each small group to share, in round robin style, the characteristics that the books had in common. Record the characteristics on chart paper and post it in the room. Some of the following characteristics may show up on your list:

   - Repetitive words and phrases
   - A predictable plot
   - Rich, descriptive language
   - Nonsense and fantasy
   - Characters solving problems and getting along with others
   - Concepts such as seasons, sizes, or feelings
   - Everyday life
   - Beautiful pictures
   - Detailed illustrations
   - Words that are fun to say out loud
   - Female and male characters shown as thinkers and doers
   - Diverse characters who are depicted without use of stereotypes
   - Positive portrayals of characters with disabilities

   Arrange to have the list typed and distributed to participants to use as a guide for selecting books for preschool children.

8. Have each group describe the unique features of one of the books they shared. Ask the participants to think of a child with whom they work who would enjoy this book. Discuss why the book would be particularly appropriate for this child. For example, a book might reflect the child's:

   - Home language
   - Family experiences
   - Interests
   - Skills

- Desire to overcome a fear such as going to the dentist
- Need to handle a new situation such as moving to a new home

Encourage participants to use what they know about individual children when selecting books and when recommending books to families.

9. Use the Background Information in this module, *Appendix E: Books for Young Children*, and *Appendix F: Choosing Books with Diverse Characters and Themes for Young Children* to describe the different kinds of books for young children. Distribute copies of these appendices to participants and suggest that they use these as resources.

10. Review the philosophy of emerging literacy and the strategies adults use to support children's language learning, including choosing developmentally appropriate books that reflect the characteristics of individual children. Explain that the next workshop in this module focuses on reading aloud to children. Distribute *Appendix G: Getting to Know Children's Literature* and encourage participants to use the book lists, Web sites, and other resources to get to know high-quality children's books.

11. **Building Bridges with Families:** Distribute the pamphlets, brochures, book lists, and other materials about the early childhood services offered by the local library. Have participants work with colleagues—for example, members of their classroom team, home visitors, or other FCC providers—to make plans for using the library's services and sharing this information with families.

Activity 3–2: Taking Stock: Choosing the Right Books

Purpose: In this activity, participants consider what children know about reading, learn about emerging literacy, discuss individually and developmentally appropriate books for young children, take a book inventory with a colleague and one or more families, and use the local library to add to their book collection.

Outcomes:

Participants encourage children to develop a love of reading.

Participants select books that reflect children's interests, skills, abilities, cultures, and families.

Participants collaborate with families to ensure that every child has access to books at home and has a regular time for reading.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 14: Book Inventory
Appendix E: Books for Young Children
Appendix F: Choosing Books with Diverse Characters and Themes for Young Children
Pamphlets, brochures, book lists, and other materials about the early childhood services offered by the local library (one set for each participant)

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on choosing books that are individually and developmentally appropriate for young children. Participants will consider what children know about books and reading, review the philosophy of emerging literacy, discuss the characteristics of individually and developmentally appropriate books, conduct a book inventory with colleagues and one or more families, and use their local library as a resource for updating their book collection.

2. Ask participants to imagine they are a four- or five-year-old child who has been exposed to books and reading since infancy. Ask participants, *What are some of the things this child knows about books and reading?* Participants may come up with answers such as these:

   - I read books by holding them right-side up.
   - Words and pictures are different.
   - Words tell us something about the pictures.
   - Words on the page have meaning—that is what we read.
   - Pictures and words symbolize objects, feelings, and actions.
   - I read and write from left to right and top to bottom.
   - Written words are made up of letters.
   - Written words are separated by spaces.
   - Each letter has at least two forms—capital and small.
   - Each letter has its own name.
   - Putting letters together in certain ways makes words.
   - Written words stay the same; the meaning does not change.
   - Books and print communicate messages.
   - Stories have a beginning, middle, and end.
   - Stories stir up your feelings and send you special messages.
   - Looking at books and reading are fun.
   - Books are valuable; I should take care of them.

   Make the point that this list represents a lot of learning, much of which takes place naturally, over time as children make their own discoveries about reading and writing.

3. Use the Background Information for this module to provide an overview of emerging literacy and the strategies that families and Head Start staff can use to support children's language learning:

   - Choosing individually and developmentally appropriate books
   - Reading aloud to children and talking with them about the characters, setting, and plot and how those elements relate to their own lives
   - Making books available to children at home and in Head Start settings so the children can look at them on their own
   - Providing writing materials to use at home and in Head Start settings so children can make their own discoveries about the connections between reading and writing

4. Distribute and discuss the information in *Appendix E: Books for Young Children* and *Appendix F: Choosing Books with Diverse Characters and Themes for Young Children*. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 14: Book Inventory* and the information about the local library's services for young children. Encourage participants to complete this activity with colleagues and involve one or more families. If necessary, help participants think of specific tasks that do not require a high level of literacy skills. Have participants complete this assignment before the next coaching session.

5. Meet with participants to discuss their completed *Handout 14: Book Inventory*. Talk about ways to continue choosing books that are individually and developmentally appropriate and continue using the library's resources. Distribute *Appendix G: Getting to Know Children's Literature* and encourage participants to use the book lists, Web sites, and other resources to get to know high-quality children's books. Encourage participants to support family reading times by providing families with information about choosing quality books for young children and using the local library.

6. **Building Bridges with Families:** Suggest that participants form a group of colleagues and families to make a collection of book fun boxes (a shoe box or other small container) for children to use at home. In each book fun box , include a children's book, materials (for example, crayons and paper), other items (puppets or an object tied to the story), and a list of activities related to the book that parents can do with their children. The group can decide on guidelines for borrowing and returning the boxes. An example follows:

Book: *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, by Bill Martin, Jr., and John Archambault

Materials: Colored paper, scissors, glue, beans, small containers, tape

Other items: A pair of maracas, alphabet blocks

Activities: Make a collage with brightly colored paper, make noise makers by filling the containers with beans and taping them shut, make up a tune to go with the book's refrain (chicka, chicka, boom, boom), pile the alphabet blocks and watch them tumble and use the noise makers and maracas when the blocks tumble down.

Activity 3–3: Will You Read to Me?

Purpose: In this activity, participants practice reading aloud to children in small groups and one-on-one and discuss techniques for one-on-one reading times.

Outcomes:

Participants encourage children to develop a love of reading.

Participants read to children one-on-one and in small groups, using developmentally appropriate strategies.

Participants plan follow-up activities and experiences and offer props that enhance children's enjoyment and understanding of books.

Participants collaborate with families to ensure that every child has access to books at home and has a regular time for reading.

Trainer Preparation Notes:

When selecting developmentally appropriate books for this workshop activity, select books that reflect the individual characteristics of the children enrolled in this Head Start program. Include a variety of books—for example, a story book, folk tale, concept book, fantasy, predictable book, and so on. Display the books on a table.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape

Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers (two copies for each participant)

Appendix H: Reading with Babies and Toddlers (distribute as a resource, if participants work with these age groups)
Children's books (one for each small group)

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on reading aloud to children in small groups and one-on-one.

2. Post four pieces of chart paper in the room and place markers nearby. Write one of the following questions on each piece of paper:

   What do children learn when someone reads to or with them?
   How can Head Start support family reading times?
   What do you like best about reading aloud to children?
   What is your greatest challenge when reading aloud to children?

   Have participants work in pairs to discuss and record their answers to these questions.

3. Discuss participants' responses to the first two questions. Make the following points:

   - Children who have been read to are more likely to become strong readers and be successful in school.

   - Reading aloud to children motivates them to want to learn to read to themselves.

   - Children develop an understanding of reading concepts by using the information they collect from participating in read-aloud sessions.

   - Children use critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving while discussing the characters and events in a book.

   - Reading aloud introduces children to new words and phrases that they often incorporate into their own vocabularies.

   - Head Start staff can read aloud and discuss books with one or two children at a time and with small groups.

   - Children who come from homes in which books and reading are valued and a part of daily life are more likely to be early readers and do well in school. Head Start staff should actively support family reading times.

- Adults, regardless of the level of their literacy skills, can share books with children.

4. Discuss participants' responses to the last two questions. Have participants share how they make reading aloud an enjoyable experience for adults and children. Ask participants to describe the strategies that they use to overcome challenges. Emphasize the importance of preparing to read a book aloud.

5. Distribute the first copy of *Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers*. Review the items on this checklist. Ask participants to form small groups of four or five persons. Have each group select a children's book to read aloud. Explain that each group will have 20 minutes to use Handout 15 to prepare for reading their book aloud and to plan ways participants can follow up on this book after reading it to children.

6. Have a member from each small group read the book aloud to another group. During the reading, participants in the remaining groups will observe and assess the read-aloud session using the items on Handout 15. After each reading, discuss what went well, how the *children* responded, and what could be done differently. Have each group share their follow-up plans.

7. Lead a discussion about reading to one or two children at a time. Ask questions such as these:

   When and where do these readings take place?
   What books do you usually read?
   Who initiates the reading session?
   What do the children do? How do they participate?
   What do children gain from these read-aloud sessions?

8. Distribute the second copy of *Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers*. Assign a different section of the checklist to each group. Give participants 15 minutes to revise the checklist so it applies to reading to one or two children at a time.

9. Ask each group to share the changes they made to the checklist. Ask, *What strategies remained the same? Which ones were changed? How were they changed?* Collect the revised checklists and arrange to have them typed, copied, and distributed to participants.

10. **Building Bridges with Families:** Suggest that participants use the revised checklists to share what they have learned about reading aloud with families. They could offer a workshop on read-aloud techniques and strategies, make an audiotape that demonstrates the tips listed on the checklist, or develop a one-page handout on read-aloud tips.

Activity 3–4: Would You Like to Hear a Story?

Purpose: In this activity, participants identify and respond to the emerging literacy skills of a specific child while planning and carrying out a small group reading experience.

Outcomes:

Participants encourage children to develop a love of reading.

Participants read to children one-on-one and in small groups, using developmentally appropriate strategies.

Participants plan follow-up activities and experiences and offer props that will enhance children's enjoyment and understanding of books.

Participants collaborate with families to ensure that every child has access to books at home and has a regular time for reading.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers
Handout 16: Portrait of an Emergent Reader
Handout 17: Responding to an Emergent Reader
Handout 18: Open-Ended Questions for Reading Aloud
Appendix H: Reading with Babies and Toddlers (distribute as a resource, if participants work with these age groups)

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on selecting books with a specific child in mind and reading aloud to children.

2. Distribute *Handout 16: Portrait of an Emergent Reader* and discuss the example on the first page. Work with participants to complete the second page of the handout for a child with whom they work. Point out that the child described will serve as the focus child for this activity.

3. Distribute and discuss the information on *Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers* and *Handout 18: Open-Ended Questions for Reading Aloud*. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 17: Responding to an Emergent Reader*. Have participants complete this assignment before the next coaching session.

Coach Preparation Notes:

If possible, observe participants reading a book aloud to a small group of children. Record what you see and hear, in writing or on audio or videotape.

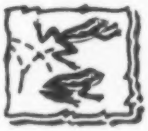
4. Meet with participants to review what happened during and after the read-aloud session. (If you observed participants reading aloud, share your written or taped notes.) Use *Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers* as a discussion guide. Talk about how the focus child responded to the book and how he or she explored the book after it was displayed in the library area. Ask about what happened when participants spoke with the child's family about his or her emergent reading skills. What plans did they make to continue supporting the child's skills in English and his or her home language?

5. Ask participants to think about times when they read a book to one or two children at a time. Discuss how these experiences are similar to and different from group reading sessions. Have participants plan ways to include both types of read-aloud sessions during each day.

6. Suggest that participants repeat this activity and focus on other children with whom they work. Encourage them to pay particular attention to children who are learning English and a home language, children who have diagnosed speech disorders or delays, and children who seldom look at books on their own.

7. **Building Bridges with Families:** Suggest that participants encourage families to read with their children at home by setting up a Head Start lending library. Books for adults and children can be loaned overnight or for a few days at a time. Set up a system for keeping track of the books. Send books home in small plastic zipper bags or vinyl pouches. (Remind families to keep plastic bags out of children's reach to prevent suffocation.) Include a few sample tips for reading aloud with young children. The library can also include audiotapes, instructions, and words for finger plays and songs the children enjoyed through Head Start.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice



Participants can build on the skills developed through this guide by completing the following activities independently or with other staff. Some of these activities can contribute to the participants' professional portfolios. (See page 4 for a description of a professional portfolio.)

Plan a Library Field Trip

Ask Head Start staff who work in partnership with families to help you lead a library field trip for a small group of families. (Use what you learn from the first trip to plan subsequent trips for other interested families.) Ask the librarians at the local library to help plan the visit. Include a tour of the adult and children's sections of the library, allow time for families to get library cards, and highlight the many services offered by libraries such as story hours, workshops for parents and teachers, programs for children with speech and language disorders, and materials available in a variety of languages. If possible, walk to and from the library or use public transportation so families will know how to get there with their children. If this is not possible, provide transportation.

Possible Portfolio Entry: Brochures, pamphlets, and other items from the library and photographs of Head Start families taking advantage of the library's services

Learn about Sources of Free or Low-Cost Books

Find out about national, state, and local organizations that are committed to making sure young children have access to books. Some of the following groups can help Head Start programs sponsor book distributions:

Reading is Fundamental (RIF) is the nation's leading children's literacy organization. Its mission is to encourage America's children to read often and well by providing access to books and the motivation to read them. Through a nationwide grassroots network of programs, RIF promotes the literacy development of nearly four million people each year.

Through training, program materials, and technical assistance, RIF helps staff and parents in Head Start, Even Start, and early childhood settings improve family reading habits and enhance the time families spend sharing books with their young children. One RIF initiative, Family of Readers, is designed to actively involve parents in selecting books and planning and operating book distribution events. See the Resources section of this guide for a list of RIF Guides for parents on reading and related topics. For more information contact:

Reading is Fundamental, Inc.
600 Maryland Avenue, SW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20024
Phone: 202-287-3220
Fax: 202-287-3196
Web Site: http://www.si.edu/rif

First Book is a national organization committed to giving disadvantaged children the opportunity to read and own their first books. This group partners with national bookstores and other organizations to distribute free books.

First Book
1133 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-393-1222

Rolling Readers USA, started by a San Diego businessman, operates in several locations throughout the country. The group gives a hardbound book to each child three times a year and organizes volunteers to visit programs such as Head Start once a week to read to children.

Rolling Readers USA
3049 University Avenue
San Diego, CA 92104
1-800-390-READ
Web Site: http://www.rollingreaders.org

Local businesses and service organizations such as the Kiwanis Club may offer grants to cover the costs of purchasing children's books. Several major publishers of children's books sponsor book clubs that feature popular titles at reasonable prices. Look for new and used books in good condition at yard sales, thrift shops, rummage sales, and discount stores.

Possible Portfolio Entry: One-page summary to share with other Head Start staff that lists sources for children's books and the services they provide

Invite Guests to Read to Children

Establish a network of guest readers who can visit classrooms or group socialization sites to share their favorite books with the children. Include Head Start staff, representatives from the community, volunteers, health care providers, and any other persons you know who would enjoy reading aloud to small groups of children. With each invitation, provide a simple, one-page handout that offers tips for choosing a book and for preparing and involving children during the read-aloud session.

Possible Portfolio Entry: List of guest readers and the handout on reading aloud with young children

Handout 13: What Makes a Good Book Good?

Part I. Sharing Your Books

Instructions: You will have 45 minutes to complete Part I and Part II. Take turns sharing a children's book with other members of your group. Follow these steps, as if you were introducing the book to a group of children:

- Introduce the author and/or illustrator.
- Remind the group members of other books by the same author and/or illustrator.
- Show the cover and point out details in the illustration.
- Read the title aloud.
- Talk about what kind of book it is. For example:

  This is a true story about something that happened a long time ago.

  This is a folk tale from El Salvador, the country where Miguel and Rosa were born.

  This is a story about a family like yours.

  This story is about some animals who live in the forest.

- Describe where and when the story takes place.
- Introduce the setting and the main characters.
- Suggest things to look and listen for while paying attention to the story.
- Show a few pages and ask, *What do you think will happen in this book?*

Part II. What Do These Books Have in Common? How Is Each One Unique?

Instructions: Identify the things that some of the shared books have in common (for example, words and phrases are repeated) and what makes each book unique (for example, one book is about a concept—size). Record your findings on chart paper and prepare to present them to the full group.

Note: Use with Activity 3-1

Handout 14: Book Inventory

Instructions: Complete this assignment before your next coaching session.

I. With a colleague and one or more families, take an inventory of the books you have on hand in your classroom or at the group socialization site. Include the books in the library area and in other areas of the environment. Record the titles of these books in the middle column of the chart below. Refer to *Appendix E: Books for Young Children* for descriptions and examples of the different kinds of books for children.

II. Discuss with your colleague and the participating families the kinds of books you would like to add to your collection to support the curriculum; reflect children's cultures, families, interests, and skills; and encourage children's emerging literacy. Then, visit the library and discuss your needs with the children's librarian. Select books for your program that are just right for the children, individually and as a group. Record the books you have added in the last column of the chart below.

Kind of Book	Books We Have Now	Books We Have Added
Participation Books		
Picture Concept Books		

Note: Use with Activity 3–2

Handout 14: Book Inventory
(Continued)

Kind of Book	Books We Have Now	Books We Have Added
Wordless Picture Books		
Beginning Picture Storybooks		
Traditional Literature		
ABC and Counting Books		

Handout 14: Book Inventory
(Continued)

Kind of Book	Books We Have Now	Books We Have Added
Predictable Books		
Poetry Books		
Picture Storybooks about: ■ Everyday life ■ Challenges ■ Fears ■ Changes in home life ■ Fantasy		
Informational Books		

Handout 14: Book Inventory
(Continued)

Kind of Book	Books We Have Now	Books We Have Added
Easy-to-Read Books		
Reference Books		
Big Books		

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Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers

Choosing a Book to Read

- I choose books that:
  - I like to read
  - Support and build on children's current interests and experiences
  - Are related to concepts children are exploring
  - Introduce new ideas and concepts
  - Have pictures the children can see
  - Are slightly above the children's current vocabulary level
  - Represent a variety of styles such as poetry, folk tales, informational, and others
- I invite children to choose the books they would like me to read.
- I repeat familiar, well-loved books often.

Getting to Know the Book

- I examine the illustrations to find information and clues in the pictures.
- I read the story to myself.
- I plan ways to vary my voice (tone, volume, pauses) to fit the plot and characters.
- I collect the props—dress-up clothes, puppets, animals, chalkboard, flannel board—that I will use to enhance the children's enjoyment of the story.

Setting the Stage for Success

- I read to no more than ten preschoolers at one time.
- I help the children get ready to listen.
- I do something to capture the children's interest (for example, I wear silly glasses or a story hat).
- I make sure that the children are comfortable and that I am comfortable.
- I make sure that everyone is sitting where he or she can see the book.

Note: Use with Activities 3–3 and 3–4

Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers (Continued)

Before Starting the Story

- I introduce the author and/or illustrator and read the title aloud.

- I remind the children of other books we have read by the same author and/or illustrator.

- I show the children the cover and point out details in the illustration.

- I talk about what kind of book it is—nonfiction, fiction, folk tale, realistic.

- I describe where and when the story takes place.

- I introduce the setting and the main characters.

- I suggest things to look and listen for while paying attention to the story.

- I show the children a few pages and ask, *What do you think will happen in this book?*

While Reading a Story

- I vary my voice to fit the characters and the plot.

- I move my finger under the words as I read.

- I stop frequently to:

  - Add information that will help the children understand what is happening
  - Rephrase something that may be confusing
  - Explain the meaning of a new word
  - Invite children to predict what may happen next
  - Ask the children about the story and characters
  - Show the pictures and describe what is happening
  - Share my own reactions to the story and characters
  - Use the props I collected to enhance the children's enjoyment of the story

- I encourage the children to participate by:

  - Inviting them to join in with rhymes, sounds, and repeated words and phrases
  - Stopping to let them add the last word to a familiar part of the text

Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers (Continued)

After Reading a Story

- I ask questions to help children:
  - Recall what happened in the story
  - Relate the story to their own lives (for example, *Did you ever . . . ?*)
  - Put themselves in the story (for example, *What would you have done . . . ?*)
  - Express their ideas and opinions and be creative

- I introduce an activity to enhance the children's understanding and enjoyment of a book such as:
  - Acting out the story with or without props
  - Making up a sequel to the story, writing it on poster board, and displaying the poster in the library area
  - Creating a group mural that shows the sequence of events in the story and reading the book again while looking at and talking about the mural
  - Learning about the author and/or illustrator
    Hearing about his or her life
    Looking at other books by the same author and/or illustrator
    Making a collage that features characters from his or her books

- I put the book in the library area so children can look at it on their own.

- I read the book again and again if children are interested.

Handout 16: Portrait of an Emergent Reader

Name: Katherine **Age:** Four-and-a-half **Home Language(s):** English and French

Describe this child's family members and how they support his or her emerging literacy.

Katherine lives with her mother, older sister (nine years), grandmother, and two uncles who attend high school. Katherine and her sister were born in the United States; the older family members immigrated to the United States from Senegal, a French-speaking country in West Africa. They have many relatives living in Senegal. Katherine's father died when she was a baby. Her mother works on the midnight shift at a hospital. She reads aloud with Katherine at bedtime and eats breakfast with her in the morning. Her grandmother, who speaks French at home, looks at books with Katherine, too. The books are written in French and have African characters. Katherine sees her sister and uncles reading for pleasure and while doing school work. The family has lively mealtime conversations. Katherine and the other children are encouraged to talk about their interests and express their ideas.

What makes this child unique (for example, interests, challenges, changes in home life, fears)?

Katherine likes painting, drawing, and making junk sculptures and collages. She spends a lot of time playing in the house corner where she is usually the leader. She tells the others what to do, and sometimes the other children call her bossy. She is very scared of spiders.

What does this child do when looking at books on his or her own?

Katherine holds books right-side up and turns the pages carefully. She retells familiar stories to other children and turns the book around to show them the pictures. Sometimes she chooses new books to explore. She looks at them on her own and then asks an adult to read to her.

What kinds of books does this child enjoy?

Katherine likes folk tales, fantasy storybooks, books about real-life experiences, and poetry.

What are three books you think this child would enjoy? Why?

The Very Busy Spider, by Eric Carle, because it may help Katherine feel less afraid of spiders.

By the Dawn's Early Light, by Karen Ackerman, because it is about a mother who works on the midnight shift.

Africa Dream, by Eloise Greenfield, because it is about a young girl who dreams about visiting her relatives in Africa and Katherine has relatives in Africa.

Note: Use with Activity 3–4

Handout 16: Portrait of an Emergent Reader (Continued)

Instructions: Complete the following for a child with whom you work. The child will be the focus of this activity.

Name: ____________________ **Age:** __________ **Home Language(s):** ________________

Describe this child's family members and how they support his or her emerging literacy.

What makes this child unique (for example, interests, challenges, changes in home life, fears)?

What does this child do when looking at books on his or her own?

What kinds of books does this child enjoy?

What are three books you think this child would enjoy? Why?

Handout 17: Responding to an Emergent Reader

Instructions: Complete this activity before your next coaching session.

1. Display the books you chose for the focus child in the library area. Encourage the child to look at the books on his or her own. Observe and talk with the child to see which one he or she finds most interesting. Note the book the child chose below:

   Title: ______________________ Author: ______________________

2. Use *Handout 15: Checklist for Reading Aloud to Preschoolers* and *Handout 18: Open-Ended Questions for Reading Aloud* to prepare for reading the book listed above to a small group of children. As you plan the read-aloud session, consider the individual characteristics of the focus child and those of other children in the group.

3. Read the book to the small group. Stop frequently to ask open-ended questions, encourage discussion, invite children to express their ideas, and so on.

4. After reading the book, engage the children in a discussion about the characters, setting, and plot. Introduce the activity you planned to enhance the children's enjoyment of the book.

5. Put the book in the library area. Observe how the focus child explores the book on his or her own.

6. Share what you have learned about this child's emergent reading skills with his or her family. Plan ways to continue supporting the child's skills in English and his or her home language.

Note: Use with Activity 3–4

Handout 18: Open-Ended Questions for Reading Aloud*

When reading a story aloud, stop to ask open-ended questions that encourage children to talk about the characters, setting, and plot. There is no right or wrong way to answer questions such as the ones listed below. These questions let children participate in the story, express their ideas and feelings, think critically, and use their imaginations. Children also gain confidence in their thinking abilities because their views are accepted.

1. *What do you think may happen next in the story?*
2. *What would you do if you were . . . ?*
3. *What did you like about the story?*
4. *What surprised you?*
5. *What made you feel happy, sad, scared?*
6. *What do you think you will remember about the story tomorrow (or when you tell your family tonight)?*
7. *What ending would you make up for the story?*
8. *What character in the story did you like best? What did you like about the character?*
9. *What new words did you hear or learn?*

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*Adapted from Children's Literacy Initiative, *Creating a Classroom Literacy Environment* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Children's Literacy Initiative, 1992), 19.

Note: Use with Activity 3–4

Module 4

Setting the Stage for Literacy Explorations

In this module, participants learn to create literacy-rich environments that support English and home language learning in home, center, group socialization, and/or FCC home settings and offer opportunities for literacy learning as they respond to children's experiences and interests.

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, the staff will be able to:

- Create an environment that demonstrates how print (written words)—in English and children's home languages—is used to convey meaning at home and in Head Start settings
- Create well-stocked, inviting, and developmentally appropriate library and writing areas in preschool classrooms
- Model ways that reading and writing skills are used to carry out daily activities at home and in Head Start settings
- Plan engaging activities and experiences that allow children, including those with disabilities, to use and expand their language skills
- Encourage children to use developmentally appropriate reading and writing materials in all areas of their homes and Head Start
- Accept and value children's reading and writing efforts and support their progress with these important learning skills

Key Concepts

- Many of the concrete experiences provided through Head Start—such as painting, drawing, using Play-Doh, dramatic play, exploring manipulatives, and building with blocks—help children develop the physical, cognitive, and socioemotional skills and understandings that are the foundations of conventional reading and writing.
- Most preschool children are not ready to learn how to read and write in conventional ways. They go through stages while building their understanding of reading and writing.
- Children learn a lot about reading and writing by being read to, watching someone write, imitating adults and older children, exploring, and experimenting.

- Preschool classrooms in centers and group socialization sites should have well-stocked, inviting library and writing areas, while portable areas—such as a basket filled with paper, pencils, and junk mail—could be created at home.

- Children can use reading and writing materials while they play and learn in indoor and outdoor areas and during activities—at home and in Head Start settings.

- Head Start staff demonstrate how print is used to communicate by labeling cubbies, making signs, writing notes, and recording children's stories on large pieces of paper in English and in home languages.

- Families and staff can help children learn how written words are used to communicate by pointing out print, in English and home languages, in the environment—signs on buses, labels on cans of food, coupons, street signs, and so on.

- Families and staff can encourage children's development of reading and writing skills by accepting their efforts without correcting mistakes or providing direct instruction.

Background Information

Researchers have found that many children who are early readers were raised in literacy-rich home environments. In these homes, children had access to reading and writing materials and learned that reading and writing are valuable, useful activities. A child's success as a reader depends more on the child's exposure to print and adults who use reading and writing every day than on the parent's education, occupation, or economic status.[1]

Literacy-Rich Homes

Literacy-rich homes have the following characteristics:

- Children are surrounded from infancy by oral language, books, and print. Various reading and writing materials are available throughout the home for children and adults.

- Adults share their ideas and feelings with children and encourage them to express themselves.

- Children see adults reading for pleasure and for specific purposes such as to pay the bills or find out what the weather will be like.

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[1] R.C. Anderson, E.H. Hiebert, J.A. Scott, and I.A.G. Wilkinson, *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois, Center for the Study of Reading, 1985).

- Families consider children's emergent reading and writing to be *real*, valuable experiences. They accept children's efforts without correcting mistakes or providing direct instruction.
- Families talk with children about the print they see around them and explain how it provides information—signs on buses, labels on food packages, coupons, street signs, and so on.

Supporting Literacy in Head Start

Child development programs such as Head Start can support children's emerging literacy by duplicating the features of the home literacy environment in center or group socialization settings. A literacy-rich classroom has the following features:

- An attractive library area, located away from distractions, with books and related items displayed so children can easily choose what they want to read and use
- A writing area, located near the library area, with writing tools, paper, an alphabet chart hung at children's eye level, and other literacy-related items children can use to explore writing and print
- Materials for reading, writing, and exploring literacy in every interest area and outdoors
- Signs and labels in English and home languages, made by adults and children, that provide information such as recipes, the names of objects, and areas where things belong
- Print dictated by children, written by adults, then read aloud together. (Print could be stories, descriptions of pictures, and comments about recent experiences.)

Literacy Experiences

At home and at Head Start, children can learn how reading and writing are used to achieve goals. For example, at home, a child might see his grandmother following a recipe in a cookbook or watch his mother reading the directions for putting a toy together. From these observations, children learn that reading and writing are used to carry out daily tasks and to communicate and receive information.

As Head Start staff develop plans for implementing the curriculum, they should include reading and writing in various daily routines and activities. Some examples follow:

- Write a group story about a neighborhood walk. Ask open-ended questions to help children recall what they did and saw on the walk. Write their comments on a large piece of paper. Use English and home languages as appropriate. Read the story aloud and then hang the paper where everyone can see it. Interested children can draw pictures to illustrate the story. Some children can retell the story to themselves. Staff and volunteers can reread it aloud to interested children.

- Sit in the writing area with the children while making labels in English and home languages for new toys and materials. The children can watch you and ask questions about what you are doing.
- Have children act out their dictated stories with props and dress-up clothes or with puppets. Children can make their own puppets by drawing the characters, cutting them out, and taping or gluing them to the ends of plastic straws. They can move the puppets by holding the other ends of the straws.
- Plan and carry out a cooking activity. Make picture recipe cards that provide step-by-step directions. (Do this in the writing area so children can watch and learn.) Have children read the recipe by putting the cards in sequence and reviewing each step. After the food has been prepared and eaten, children can talk about what they did first, next, and so on and how the food looked and tasted. Some children may want to make their own recipe cards to take home.
- Provide something interesting to talk, write, and read about. Sit on the floor with a small group of children. Pass around a variety of fruit and vegetable seeds (for example, an avocado pit, apple seeds, squash seeds) for children to touch, smell, and examine. Say that these are mystery items. Ask children to describe these items by comparing their size, color, shape, and texture. Show children the fruits and vegetables that go with each seed. Serve a snack featuring these fruits and vegetables with dips. Read a book about seeds such as *The Carrot Seed*, by Ruth Krauss.
- Invite children to talk about whatever is of interest to them—their families, what they did yesterday, what they will do tomorrow, something they saw on the way to Head Start, a funny thing a baby brother said. Write their personal stories on a large piece of paper and read them back to individuals or the group.
- Record children's questions, thoughts, and ideas as they take part in an in-depth study. At the beginning of the study, write down children's questions and comments and post them next to photographs of the children engaged in activities. As the in-depth study proceeds, continue documenting what's happening—what the children say and do. Read the words to children and talk about what they are learning.

Supporting Emergent Writing

Young children draw and write on their own, talk about print with adults and other children, and watch other people writing. Through trial and error, they discover many of the rules of conventional writing—the way adults write. Although direct instruction in reading and writing is inappropriate for preschool children, it is important to respond to their interest in writing. Here are some examples of adults responding to children:

- While talking with his grandchild, a grandfather points to the letters on a box of crackers and says, *That's an R like in your name, Roberto.* Roberto says, *There's another one. And another one.*
- Two children stand next to an alphabet chart hung at their eye level in the writing area of their classroom. One child traces the letter B as she says, *This is a B. Like in my name, Brittany.* The other child says, *Help me find a J. Jordan begins with a J.*
- A teacher watches a child placing magnetic letters on a tray. The child says, *Where's the X? I can't find the X.* The teacher asks, *What does the X look like?* When the child picks up the X, the teacher says, *I knew you could find the X.*
- A child tells a volunteer at a group socialization session, *I want to write a letter.* The volunteer shows her where she can find paper and a pencil and sits and writes with her. They take turns reading their letters aloud.
- A child sits at the kitchen table, writing. She asks her older brother, *How do you spell my name?* As he writes her name at the top of her paper, he says each letter out loud, *N–I–K–K–I. Nikki. That's your name.*
- Two children play lotto, a game they made with their FCC provider, using pictures cut from magazines.
- A child dips a paint brush in a bucket of water and writes a *B*, backward, on the side of the building. His teacher traces the *B* and says, *The B is almost dry, but I can still see the curves.* She does not tell him the *B* is facing the wrong way because she knows that over time he will learn the conventional way to write letters.
- Two children play a patterning game on the classroom computer. Their teacher walks by and asks them to tell her about what they are doing.

Once children recognize that written marks have meaning, they can participate in a daily sign-in procedure. This gives each child the opportunity to practice writing a word of great personal importance—his or her name. It also allows children to use writing to achieve a goal—taking attendance. Depending on ages and skill levels, teachers can set up an effective system such as the following:

- The children each have a card featuring a picture, symbol, or photograph and their name. They *sign in* by choosing their own card from a box or chart and placing it in another one.
- The children's photographs and names are displayed on a chart with pockets under each one. They *sign in* by placing an index card in their own pocket. Later in the year, they may scribble, use scribble writing, or write some or all of the letters in their name to sign the card before placing it in the pocket.
- The children *sign in* on a blank attendance sheet by drawing, scribbling, scribble writing, or writing some or all of the letters in their names. After a few days, the teachers will be able to recognize each child's unique mark.

A daily sign-in routine benefits children in many ways. It:

- Contributes to their sense of self and confidence in their skills
- Lets them practice writing their names
- Helps them understand that printed words can represent something concrete (*These scribbles, letters, and/or words are my name.*)
- Leads them to notice that the letters in their names also appear in other printed words
- Encourages children to write during other activities

Literacy Discoveries

Children can learn a lot about print, writing, and reading when they have opportunities to observe and explore literacy-rich home and Head Start environments. Understandings such as the following lead children to eventually use conventional writing:

- Drawing and writing are different.
- Letters are combined to make words.
- Letters are written right-side up and face in certain directions.
- The letters in words are written in a certain order.

- Words are written and read on a page from top to bottom and from left to right in English and many other languages.
- There are spaces between written words.

Head Start staff and families can support these discoveries by encouraging children to use reading and writing materials and modeling how they use reading and writing for pleasure and to accomplish goals. They can point out print in the environment, and answer children's questions about language. More information on children's writing appears in *Appendix I: Learning about Writing*.

Trainer/Coach Preparation Notes:

The primary focus of this module is encouraging the emerging literacy of preschool children at home and in Head Start settings. Although some of the information can be adapted for infants and toddlers, most of the strategies are developmentally appropriate for preschoolers and not for younger age groups.

Activity 4–1: Creating a Literacy-Rich Environment

Purpose: In this activity, participants learn to create literacy-rich environments that support the emergent reading and writing skills of preschool children.

Outcomes:

Participants create an environment that demonstrates how print (written words)—in English and children's home languages—is used to convey meaning at home and in Head Start settings.

Participants create well-stocked, inviting, and developmentally appropriate library and writing areas in preschool classrooms.

Participants model ways that reading and writing skills are used to carry out daily activities at home and in Head Start settings.

Participants encourage children to use developmentally appropriate reading and writing materials in all areas of their homes and Head Start settings.

Trainer Preparation Notes:

Slides or photographs of literacy-rich home and Head Start environments can greatly enhance the presentation and discussion of ideas presented in this workshop activity. Trainers can bring slides or photographs from their own collections or ask participants to bring pictures of their classrooms, homes, or the homes of Head Start families.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape (enough for the trainer and small groups)
Art materials: chart paper or butcher paper, thick and thin markers, index cards, stickers, labels, scissors, glue, and so on
Catalogs showing supplies for early childhood programs
Handout 19: Creating a Literacy Environment
Handout 20: Setting Up a Library Area
Handout 21: Setting Up a Writing Area
Handout 22: Encouraging Literacy in All Interest Areas
Handout 23: Using Print in the Environment
Handout 24: Helping Your Child Become a Reader

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on strategies for creating literacy-rich environments at home and in classrooms at centers and group socialization sites. Participants will learn about each strategy and work in small groups to design ideal environments.

2. Write the following statement on chart paper:

   Children are most likely to make their own discoveries about reading and writing when . . .

   Ask participants to think about how they would complete this statement. Record their responses on the chart paper.

   Use the Background Information in this module to review the features of home and Head Start environments that support emerging literacy. Also discuss how adults (families and Head Start staff) can encourage children's literacy explorations.

3. Ask participants to form small groups according to their interest in the following topics:

- Encouraging families to create home literacy environments
- Setting up a classroom library area
- Setting up a classroom writing area
- Encouraging literacy in all areas of the classroom environment
- Using print in the environment

4. Distribute *Handout 19: Creating a Literacy Environment*. Review the four steps described on the handout.

   Distribute *Handout 20: Setting Up a Library Area*, *Handout 21: Setting Up a Writing Area*, *Handout 22: Encouraging Literacy in All Interest Areas*, *Handout 23: Using Print in the Environment*, and *Handout 24: Helping Your Child Become a Reader*. Participants will use the handout that is related to their interest to complete the four steps described on Handout 19. They can use all of the handouts as resources after the workshop is over. Handout 24 is written so participants can give copies to families.

   Give each group art materials and a catalog of early childhood supplies. Give participants 45 minutes to complete the assignment.

5. Have the small groups take turns sharing their literacy environments with the full group. Use their presentations to reinforce the key features of these environments and emphasize how they support children's literacy learning.

6. Ask participants to select one strategy or idea from the workshop to implement in their Head Start program. Encourage participants to share what they have learned with colleagues and families.

7. **Building Bridges with Families:** Suggest that participants plan a workshop for families on simple ways to create home literacy environments. Provide materials families can use to make bookshelves, family journals, and portable baskets of reading and writing materials. See *Handout 24: Helping Your Child Become a Reader* for more ideas.

Activity 4–2: We Want to Read and Write

Purpose: In this activity, participants provide or enhance environments in home and Head Start settings that encourage children to make their own discoveries about reading and writing.

Outcomes:

Participants create an environment that demonstrates how print (written words)—in English and children's home languages—is used to convey meaning at home and in Head Start settings.

Participants create well-stocked, inviting, and developmentally appropriate library and writing areas in preschool classrooms.

Participants model ways that reading and writing skills are used to carry out daily activities at home and in Head Start settings.

Participants encourage children to use developmentally appropriate reading and writing materials in all areas of their homes and Head Start settings.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 20: Setting Up a Library Area
Handout 21: Setting Up a Writing Area
Handout 22: Encouraging Literacy in All Interest Areas
Handout 23: Using Print in the Environment
Handout 24: Helping Your Child Become a Reader

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on creating literacy-rich environments that encourage children to make their own discoveries about reading and writing. Participants will assess the literacy-related features of a classroom at a center or group socialization site and change it to enhance children's literacy discoveries. Participants will learn about literacy-rich home environments and encourage families to nurture their children's literacy learning at home and in the community.

2. Use the Background Information in Modules 3 and 4 and participants' knowledge and experience supporting children's literacy development to review how children make sense of conventional reading and writing. Ask participants to help you generate a list of concepts children learn about reading and writing. Here are some examples:

   - Words can be spoken, read, and written.
   - Drawing and writing are different.
   - Words are symbols for real things, feelings, and actions.
   - Writing is talk written down.
   - We read the words in books and not the pictures.
   - We combine letters to make words.

- Letters are written right-side up and face in certain directions.
- The letters in words are written in a certain order.
- There are spaces between written words.
- Words are written and read on a page from top to bottom and from left to right in English and many other languages.

3. For each example you and the participants come up with, discuss how children might make the discovery. For example, a child might discover that we read the words in books and not the pictures after numerous read-aloud sessions with a parent or teacher.

4. Use *Handout 24: Helping Your Child Become a Reader* and the Background Information for this module to review the characteristics of literacy-rich home environments. Explain that Head Start staff can encourage the literacy learning that children experience in literacy-rich home environments through the following key strategies: setting up well-stocked library and writing areas, placing reading and writing materials in all interest areas and outdoors, and using print throughout the classroom to provide meaningful information.

5. Distribute and discuss the information provided on *Handout 20: Setting Up a Library Area, Handout 21: Setting Up a Writing Area, Handout 22: Encouraging Literacy in All Interest Areas*, and *Handout 23: Using Print in the Environment*.

6. Ask participants to choose one of the following tasks to complete in their classroom during the next week. Develop a plan to:

   - Work with a family to enhance the literacy learning opportunities in their home or to help them learn a skill such as reading aloud
   - Create or enhance the library area
   - Create or enhance the writing area
   - Provide or enhance the reading and writing materials available in all interest areas and outdoors
   - Provide or enhance the use of meaningful print in the environment

   Explain that they can use the handout related to the chosen task as a reference. Have participants complete the assignment before the next coaching session.

7. Meet with participants to discuss their plans for their chosen task. Suggest changes and/or offer resources as needed.

8. Ask participants to implement their plans and conduct at least three observations of children to assess the impact of the changes they have made. Have participants complete the assignment before the next coaching session.

9. Meet with participants to discuss their observations. Offer assistance in making further changes, if appropriate. Suggest that they work with colleagues and families to plan, implement, and evaluate changes to other elements of the literacy environment.

10. **Building Bridges with Families:** Have participants think of a way to support families who want to encourage their children's literacy learning at home and in the community. For example, a participant might create a bulletin board display, make an album using photographs from families' homes (with their permission), hold a workshop, or make a series of one-page information flyers that provide simple, useful tips.

Activity 4–3: Making Our Mark

Purpose: In this activity, participants learn about the stages that children pass through while learning to write and plan experiences that enhance children's language learning.

Outcomes:
Participants plan engaging activities and experiences that allow children, including those with disabilities, to use and expand their language skills.

Participants encourage children to use developmentally appropriate reading and writing materials in all areas of their homes and Head Start settings.

Participants model ways that reading and writing skills are used to carry out daily activities at home and in Head Start settings.

Participants accept and value children's reading and writing efforts and support their progress with these important learning skills.

Trainer Preparation Notes:

When participants sign up for this workshop, ask them to bring some examples of children's writing to share with the group.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 25: Planning Literacy Experiences
Appendix I: Learning about Writing

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on how children learn about writing and how these discoveries relate to oral language and reading. Participants will plan literacy experiences that build on children's interests and activities.

2. Ask participants to imagine the following scenario:

   Someone has given you some vegetables from his or her garden. They have green, leafy tops, and the bottoms are round, hard, and red. You forgot to ask the name of the vegetable, but you want to cook it for dinner. What can you do?

   Have participants work with others at their tables to answer the question.

3. Lead a discussion about the process each group used to answer the question. Most likely, they relied on what they already knew about vegetables and cooking to construct knowledge about how to cook the mystery vegetable. Explain that the process they used to answer the question is similar to the process children use when constructing knowledge about writing. Point out that just as you might make some mistakes while learning the correct way to cook the vegetable, children also make mistakes as they learn to write in conventional ways. For example, a child may write letters backward because he or she has not figured out that they must face in a certain direction.

4. Use the Background Information in this module and *Appendix I: Learning about Writing* to review the stages children pass through as they learn about writing and how this learning is related to discoveries about speaking and reading. Use the examples of children's writing (yours and those brought by participants) to illustrate the early

scribbling, controlled scribbling, basic forms, and pictorial stages. Emphasize the importance of supporting emergent writing in conjunction with emergent reading.

5. Distribute and review the instructions for *Handout 25: Planning Literacy Experiences*. Have participants form four small groups and randomly assign a situation to each group. Give participants 30 minutes to complete this assignment.

6. Ask each group to share their plans for encouraging children's emerging literacy. Have participants from the other groups take turns providing feedback on the plans.

7. Ask participants to think of a recent experience the children shared or something they seem particularly interested in. Use the planning format on page two of *Handout 25: Planning Literacy Experiences* to help participants develop some ideas for encouraging children's emerging literacy as they build on this experience or interest.

8. Summarize the topics discussed in the workshop and answer participants' questions. Distribute copies of *Appendix I: Learning about Writing* as a reference.

9. **Building Bridges with Families:** Suggest that participants revise page two of *Handout 25: Planning Literacy Experiences* so families could use it to plan ways to enhance their home literacy environments. Areas of the environment could become rooms in the home, outdoors, and places in the community. Environmental print would be the words found on items such as the labels on food containers, street signs, and advertising posters. The activities section could be revised to focus on everyday family routines.

Activity 4–4: Language All around Us

Purpose: In this activity, participants learn about the stages children pass through as they construct knowledge about writing and develop a planning web for incorporating literacy experiences in new ways.

Outcomes:

Participants plan engaging activities and experiences that allow children, including those with disabilities, to use and expand their language skills.

Participants encourage children to use developmentally appropriate reading and writing materials in all areas of their homes and Head Start settings.

Participants accept and value children's reading and writing efforts and support their progress with these important learning skills.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, tape
Handout 26: Children Learn about Writing
Handout 27: Emerging Literacy Planning Web
Appendix I: Learning about Writing

1. Explain to participants that this activity will focus on the stages children pass through as they explore writing and on opportunities for encouraging children's literacy development while responding to their interests and shared experiences.

2. Ask participants to imagine themselves in the following situation:

   You are teaching yourself a new skill (for example, knitting, indoor gardening, jewelry making, auto repair). You just spent a long time figuring out something (knitting a difficult stitch, potting some plant clippings, welding two pieces together, changing a spark plug). You are so proud of the results of your hard work that you show it to someone who is an expert in this area. This person sees that you have made some mistakes. What could the person say that would encourage you to keep learning about this skill?

3. Explain that children are in a similar position when they learn about oral and written language. When figuring out the conventional ways to use language, they make what adults may consider to be mistakes. Adults need to resist the urge to correct children. Instead, they should encourage children to continue their trial and error explorations. Ask participants how they would offer encouragement in the following situations:

   A child makes a drawing and does some scribble writing alongside the picture. She asks you to read the scribble writing.

   A child writes his name. All of the letters are there, but they are in the wrong order.

   A child writes a series of words using all the letters she knows. Each word is different from the others. She reads them to you, but the words she speaks are not tied phonetically to the written words.

   A child looks at the brand name label sticker on the skin of an banana and says, That says *banana.*

A child sees the first letter of her first name on a sign. She says, Look, there's my name.

Ask participants to share examples from their own experiences of how they responded to children with encouragement rather than correction.

4. Distribute and discuss the information in *Appendix I: Learning about Writing*. Distribute and discuss the examples of children's writing on *Handout 26: Children Learn about Writing*. As you look at each example, ask participants to say what the child who wrote it knows about writing.

5. Discuss the following examples of planned literacy experiences that were provided in the Background Information for this module:

   - Writing and reading a group story
   - Inviting children to talk about their interests
   - Acting out stories with props and dress-up clothes or puppets
   - Leading a cooking activity
   - Talking about an interesting object

6. Ask participants to think of an experience the children recently shared or something they seem particularly interested in. Distribute *Handout 27: Emerging Literacy Planning Web* and help participants develop a planning web that shows how they can encourage children's emerging literacy while building on this experience or interest. Reproduce the web on a piece of chart paper if you need more room to write the plans. Ask participants to implement their plans during the upcoming week.

7. Meet with participants to discuss what happened when they implemented their plans.

   What did the children do?

   How did they use and enhance their emerging literacy skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing?

   How did the adults encourage children's literacy explorations?

8. **Building Bridges with Families:** Suggest that participants involve families in using the planning web as a tool to make sure that their environment, planned activities, and interactions with children respond to experiences and interests and encourage emerging literacy. The suggestions offered by families are likely to enhance the multicultural aspects of the literacy environment.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Participants can build on the skills developed through this guide by completing the following activities, independently or with other staff. Some of these activities can contribute to participants' professional portfolios. (See page 4 for a description of a professional portfolio.)

Write and Talk with Children

You can learn a lot about children's thinking and writing skills by writing with them and talking about what you are doing. Ask open-ended questions or make comments that encourage children to talk—*That's the first time I've seen you make the letter* P. Talk about your own writing, too—*I need to send a note to Ms. Parker. First, I'll write,* Dear Ms. Parker. *There's a* P *at the beginning of her name.*

Possible Portfolio Entry: Samples of children's writing

Bring Literacy Outdoors

Examine the outdoor area used by children and think of ways to offer literacy-related activities and materials outdoors. For example, children can trace letters in the sandbox, look for shapes in nature that look like letters (for example, in tree branches), paint (and write) with water on the side of the building, paint (and write) at easels, use chalk on the sidewalk, and read under a shady tree or at a picnic bench.

Possible Portfolio Entry: Photographs of children engaged in outdoor literacy learning

Make Your Own Books

Plan and lead a book-making activity so children can write, illustrate, and bind their own books. Help children put clear adhesive paper on the covers so the books will be durable. Have children take their books home to show their families. Provide simple, illustrated directions and basic materials (paper, cardboard, laces, clear adhesive paper) so children can make books at home. If children bring their books back to Head Start, place them in the library area where children can read to themselves and others.

Possible Portfolio Entry: Copy of the instructions children took home to their families

Handout 19: Creating a Literacy Environment

Instructions: Each small group will use the appropriate handout distributed by the trainer and the combined knowledge and experience of group members to create one element of a literacy environment: library area, writing area, interest areas, environmental print, and homes. You will have 45 minutes to complete the following steps:

Step 1. Discuss what you want children to learn when they experience this element of literacy environment. What do you expect them to do? What literacy behaviors will they practice?

Step 2. Use the answers to the questions in Step 1 to guide your discussion of how to create the element of a literacy environment that your group is focusing on.

Step 3. Use the materials provided by the trainer to draw the element of a literacy environment. You can assume that sufficient financial and staff resources are available. Label everything clearly so the other participants can identify the features. Remember to include the people (teachers, home visitors, FCC providers, and/or family members) who are important parts of the literacy environment.

Step 4. Display your drawing on the wall. Select a member of your group to present your creation to the full group. Help this individual prepare to describe the features and how they will support children's literacy learning.

Note: Use with Activity 4–1

Handout 20: Setting Up a Library Area

Location:

- In a location visible upon entering the room
- In an area defined on three sides by low shelves and walls
- Near the writing area
- Away from distractions
- In a space large enough for at least four children to use at one time
- In a spot with good lighting

Furnishings:

- Child-sized table and chairs
- Beanbag chairs
- Children's rocking chairs
- Large pillows
- Carpet or area rug
- Low, open shelves

Decorations:

- Posters and displays related to books
- Pictures and signs made by the children
- Photographs of children and adults reading books
- Plants
- Interesting things to look at and talk about (for example, a seashell)

Props to Encourage Acting Out Stories:

- Puppets
- Felt board and pieces
- Items related to familiar books

Note: Use with Activities 4–1 and 4–2

Handout 20: Setting Up a Library Area (Continued)

Books and Related Items:

- Two displayed books per child in the class or group socialization session (three to four books per child in the collection)
- Different categories of books (storybooks, concept books, poetry, and so on)
- Books displayed at eye level on racks or low, open shelves, with covers facing out
- Books that have been read aloud to children
- Books that have not been read aloud
- Stuffed animals for children to hold while looking at books
- Inexpensive children's magazines with well-written articles about interesting topics
- Tape player with earphones
- Books on tape (purchased or made by staff and families) in resealable plastic bags
- Blank tapes (for children to make their own recordings)

Special Tips:

- Offer a magazine to a child who tends to ignore books
- Rotate books regularly so new ones are always on display
- Encourage children to care for books by:
  - Covering books with clear adhesive paper or library covers
  - Fixing damaged books or removing them until repaired
  - Providing a repair kit for mending torn pages
- Help children set a few simple rules about caring for books. Post the rules in the library area:

  We Take Care of Our Books

  We turn pages carefully.
  We keep pencils, pens, crayons, and markers away from books.
  We put books back on the shelf (or rack) when finished with them.
  We put books with torn pages or covers in the repair box.

Handout 21: Setting Up a Writing Area*

Location:

- In a location visible upon entering the room
- In an area defined on three sides by low shelves and walls
- Near the library area
- In a space large enough for at least four children to use at one time
- Away from distractions
- In a spot with good lighting

Furnishings:

- Carpet or area rug
- Low, open shelves
- Child-sized table and chairs
- Desk and chair (for an office)
- Personal writing area (provide a cardboard appliance carton or place a screen in front of a desk and chair)

Suggested Writing Tools:

- Chalk (white and colored)
- Markers (washable, nontoxic, thick and thin tips)
- Crayons
- Pencils (thick and thin lead, regular and colored)

Suggested Surfaces to Write On:

- Chalkboards (wall and lap) and cardboard
- Magic slates
- Ready-made blank books
- Paper (lined and unlined; graph; different sizes, colors, weights, textures; stationery)
- Notepads and notebooks
- Index cards (lined and unlined, different sizes)

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*Based in part on Rebecca Isbell, *The Complete Learning Center Book*, (Beltsville, Md.: Gryphon House, 1995), 90–96.

Note: Use with Activities 4–1 and 4–2

Handout 21: Setting Up a Writing Area (Continued)

Provide Literacy-Related Items:

- Stamps and stamp pads
- Alphabet manipulatives (for example, letter bricks and a baseplate, alphabet sponges)
- Book-binding materials (stapler, hole punch, laces)
- Pencil erasers
- Scissors
- Stickers
- Glue and paste
- Typewriter
- Computer and developmentally appropriate programs
- Clipboards
- Alphabet chart (hung at children's eye level)
- Envelopes
- Receipt books
- Junk mail
- Calendars (current and old) and old catalogs and magazines
- Coupons and greeting cards
- File folders and portable file boxes
- Mail bag (a tote bag with long handles so it can be hung over a shoulder)
- Mail box (cardboard box with a slit in the top)

Special Tips:

- Hang a clothesline with clothespins to display children's writing and drawings
- Provide tools and surfaces, hung at children's height, for group writing such as:
    - — A blackboard hung at children's height, with white and colored chalk and erasers
    - — A large piece of heavy-weight paper posted at children's height, with writing tools tied on long strings and attached to the wall with tape
    - — An erasable board with special markers and erasers

Handout 22: Encouraging Literacy in All Interest Areas

Instructions: Review the following example. Then design a classroom with literacy materials in each interest area and indicate how literacy materials could be used outdoors.

Example:

Area: **House Corner**

Literacy Materials:	**How Children Could Use Them:**
Menus	*Read menus in a restaurant*
Food containers	*Read food packages*
Calendars	*Write appointments on a calendar*
Magazines	*Read magazines while waiting for the doctor*
Cookbooks	*Read recipes in cookbooks*
Tickets	*Use tickets to play bus, movie theater, sports event*
Storybooks	*Read bedtime stories to babies*
Paper or notepads and pencils	*Make shopping lists*
Cardboard, markers, and tape	*Write and post signs for grocery store*
Books	*Read to dolls or stuffed animals*
Pad of sales slips	*Write food orders, prescriptions, and receipts*

Note: Use with Activities 4–1 and 4–2

Handout 23: Using Print in the Environment

Print That Says What Things Are or Where Things Belong

- Names and symbols on cubbies and coat hooks
- Labels on shelves and containers used to hold materials
- Labels that name the interest areas
- Labels that name things (for example, *stove* on the toy stove in the house corner)
- Labels that say what items are stored on supply shelves or in closets

Print That Reminds You What to Do

- Signs that state the number of children allowed in an area at one time
- A list of a few simple rules
- Instructions for the care of pets
- Signs made by children to protect their work (for example, *Please do not touch our building*)

Print That Provides Information

- Bulletin boards (post notices to parents, interesting pictures, stories)
- Recipe charts
- Children's names on artwork (written by children or dictated to an adult)
- Descriptions of children's artwork (dictated to an adult who writes the child's words)
- Alphabet charts hung at children's eye-level

Print That Asks You to Respond or Contribute

- Sign-up sheets (for example, for children to check out books from the classroom library)
- Surveys (in which children can answer a question by writing their names in the appropriate place. For example, *What kind of fruit do you like to eat? Apples or Bananas?*)
- Attendance charts (for example, where children can put name cards in a slot on the chart, write their names on a large piece of paper, or put checks next to their names on a list)
- Helper chart (so children can sign up for a classroom job)
- Message boards (to let children and adults send and receive messages)
- Language experience charts (where adults can write children's stories, recollections of a shared experience, poems, interesting words, comments, and ideas)

Special Tips:

- Use English and home languages.
- Hang at children's eye level. Print large enough to be seen from across the room.
- Let children see you making signs so they will know why and how print is used.
- Invite children to make their own signs and labels.

Note: Use with Activities 4–1 and 4–2

Handout 24: Helping Your Child Become a Reader

Talk with your child.

- Watch and listen to your child. Pay attention to words and gestures. Respond to what your child does, says, or asks.
- Talk about what you are doing, what you did, and what you plan to do. Ask your child about his ideas and suggestions.
- Tell stories about your childhood. Describe your favorite toys, friends, games, and holidays.
- Record your child's history on tape or in a family album. Talk about the day your child was born or adopted, where her name came from, what she liked to do when she was a baby.
- Listen patiently when your child tells a story. Ask questions to help him tell the whole story in the order in which events took place.
- Give your child interesting experiences to talk about. Young children find everyday errands and routines interesting, especially when they do them with favorite adults.

Read aloud every day.

- Start reading aloud today; no child is too young to be read to.
- Read at the same time every day, perhaps after dinner or at bedtime.
- Read when your child asks you to.
- Read in a special place such as a comfortable chair, and in all parts of the home and outdoors.
- Read your child's favorite books over and over.
- Read books you like that introduce new words, ideas, places, and people.
- Relax and let your child set the pace for reading. Have your child turn pages, repeat words, point out letters, and look for details in pictures.
- Stop often to talk about the pictures, answer questions, and ask, *What do you think will happen? Where would you go? What are they doing?*

Note: Use with Activities 4–1 and 4–2

Handout 24: Helping Your Child Become a Reader (Continued)

- Ask your child to read aloud to you. He can retell a favorite story, make up a story to go with a wordless picture book, or follow along on a tape.
- Point to letters and talk about the sound they make.
- Make books come alive; change your voice or add sound effects.

Encourage your child to read and write.

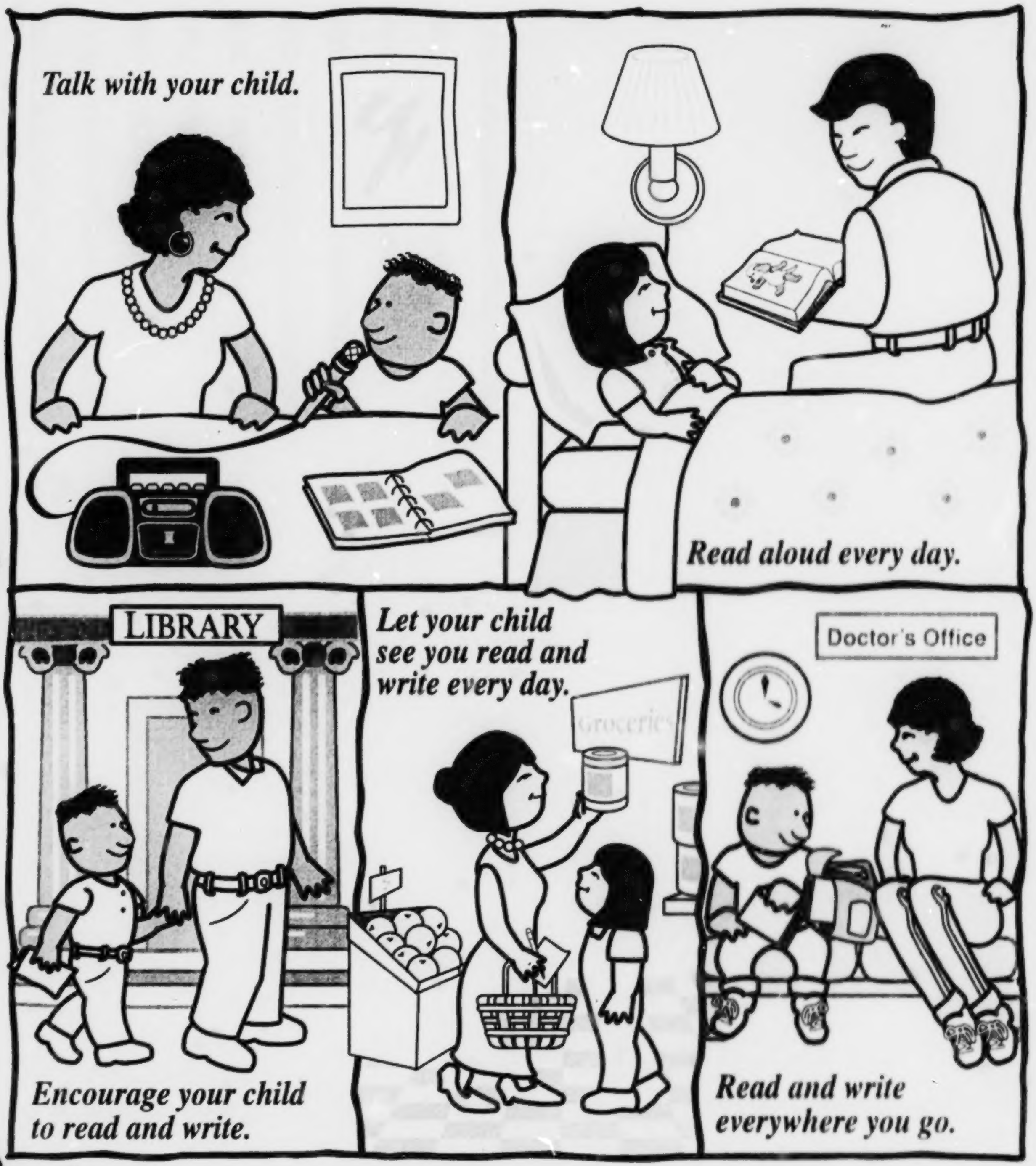
- Work with other parents and Head Start staff to organize classroom lending libraries and sponsor book giveaway programs such as Reading is Fundamental.
- Borrow books from the local library.
- Store books and writing materials in a box, drawer, or low shelf where your child can reach them.
- Save paper bags, junk mail, catalogs, and magazines for children to use.
- Staple sheets of paper together using words and drawings, photographs, or pictures from magazines. Take turns reading the story aloud.
- Make letters your child can trace with a finger using sand paper, fabric scraps, or foam packing peanuts pasted on cardboard.

Let your child see you read and write.

- Read aloud from a newspaper or magazine. Read the caption under an interesting photo.
- Talk about what you are writing: a shopping list, letter, or note on the calendar. Read it aloud.
- Read aloud at the grocery store: food packages, signs, prices, coupons.
- Read aloud at home: recipes or how to prepare packaged food.

Read and write everywhere you go.

- Fill a tote bag or backpack with books, paper, crayons, and other things for reading and writing. Bring it when you do errands, take a trip, or wait—for the doctor, store cashier, barber, or bus.


Talk with your child.
Read aloud every day.
LIBRARY
Encourage your child to read and write.
Let your child see you read and write every day.
Groceries
Doctor's Office
Read and write everywhere you go.

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Handout 25: Planning Literacy Experiences

Instructions: You will have 30 minutes to complete this assignment. Discuss the situation assigned to your group and what Head Start staff can do to encourage children's emerging literacy. Use the second page of this handout to develop a plan. Choose one group member to present your plan to the full group.

1. The Picnic

The staff, children, and families of a Head Start home-based program held a picnic last weekend at a local park. They played games, went on a nature walk, and sang songs before eating barbecued chicken and all the trimmings. The celebration ended with families telling their favorite stories to the children. *How can Head Start staff encourage children's emerging literacy as they follow up on this experience?*

2. The New Playground

A Migrant Head Start center just completed a new playground that is now accessible to children with disabilities. For the first time, each classroom has direct access to the outdoors. The toddlers are very excited because some of the new equipment is sized just for them. *How can Head Start staff encourage toddlers' emerging literacy in the new playground?*

3. The Building Renovation

Across the street from a Head Start FCC home, an old school is being renovated to create a new community center. Each day the children watch from the window as trucks deliver materials, backhoes dig up the blacktop, and workers come and go. *How can the FCC provider encourage the children's emerging literacy as they respond to this interest in the renovation project?*

4. The Grocery Store Tour

Recently, a Head Start class took a behind-the-scenes tour of a grocery store. The children learned about the different departments such as produce, dairy, meat, delicatessen, and household products. They learned about scanning price bars, packing customers' purchases so they don't get damaged, and making change. *How can Head Start staff encourage the children's emerging literacy as they follow up on this tour?*

Note: Use with Activity 4–3

Handout 25: Planning Literacy Experiences (Continued)

Note: You do not have to use every section of this form. Use only the sections that are relevant to your plans.

What materials might staff add to the environment? How might children use them?

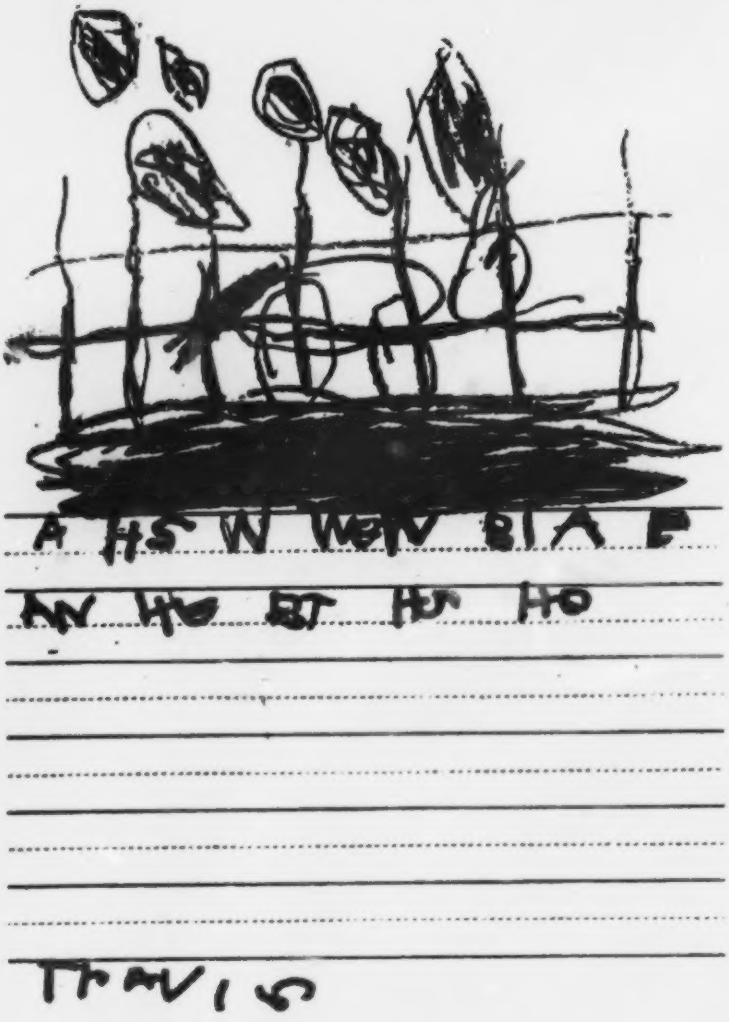
- Library area
- Writing area
- Other indoor interest areas
- Outside play area

How can staff use environmental print (signs, labels, charts)? How might children respond?

Describe one or more activities that the staff can offer.

- Activity:
- Goals for children:
- Materials:
- Setting:

Handout 26: Children Learn about Writing

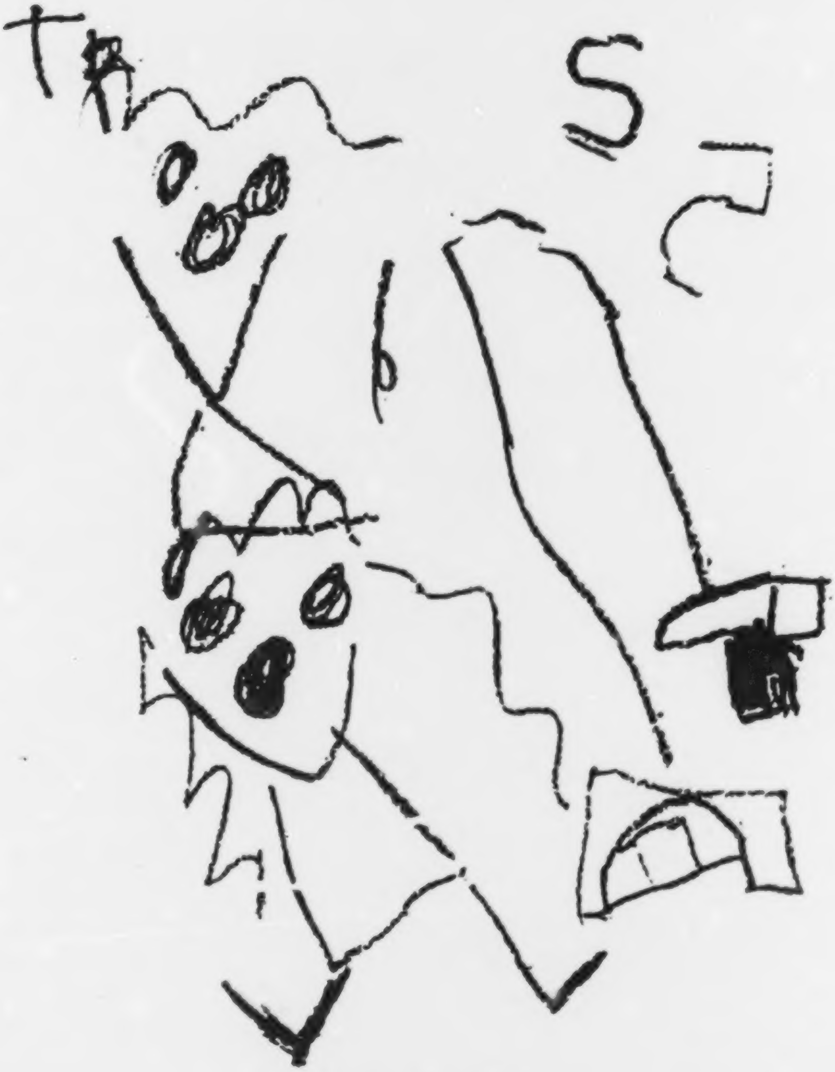

A HS W WGN BI A F
AN HE BT HS HO
TRAVIS

A horse was walking by a fence and he bumped his head.
(Invented Spelling)

Writing sample courtesy of Travis Gosselin.

Note: Use with Activity 4–4

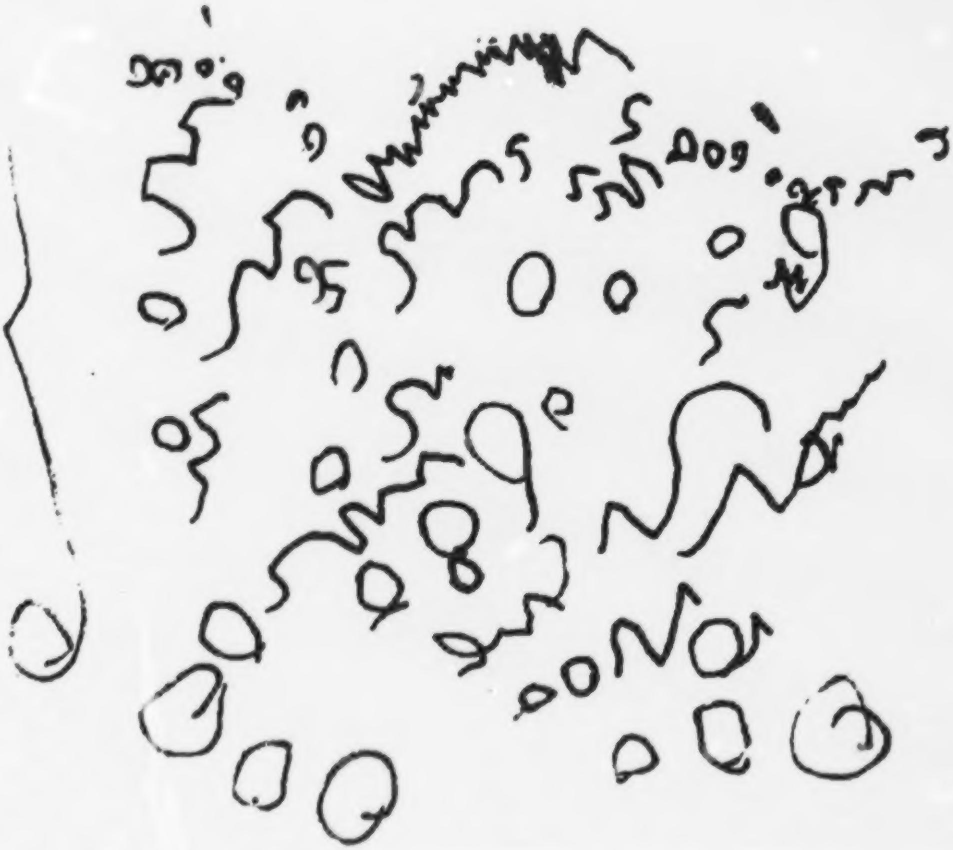
Handout 26: Children Learn about Writing (Continued)



Going to the library.
(Early Cursive)

Writing sample courtesy of Travis Gosselin.

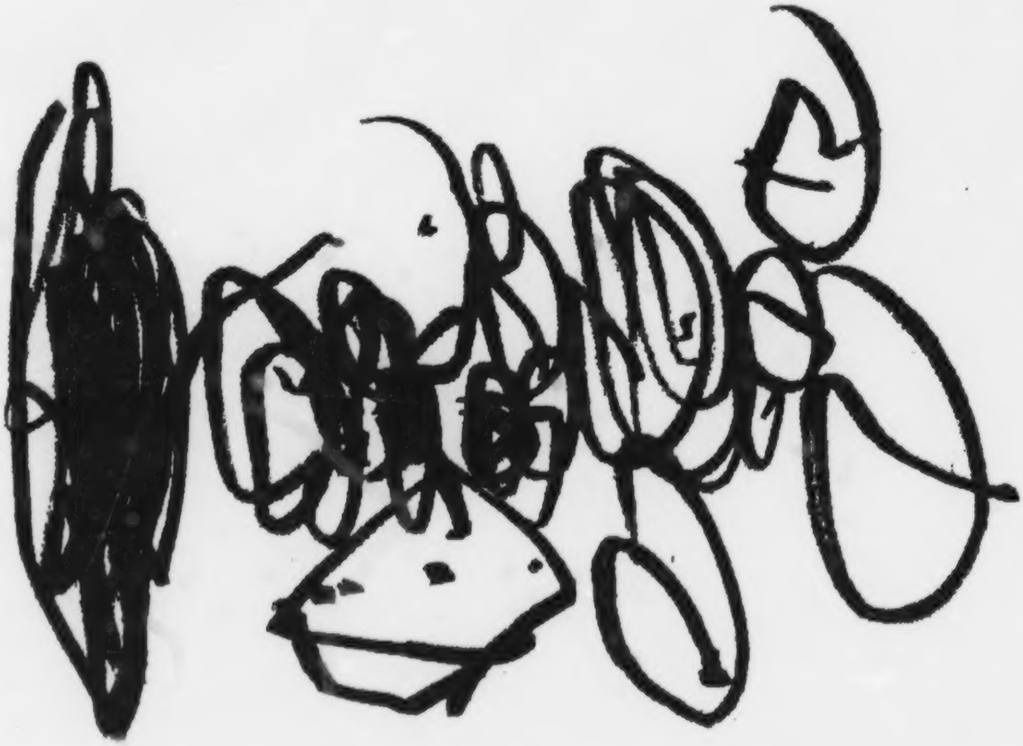
Handout 26: Children Learn about Writing
(Continued)



Is this about a dog?
(Controlled Scribbling)

Writing sample courtesy of Saint Bernardine Head Start in Baltimore, Maryland.

Handout 26: Children Learn about Writing (Continued)

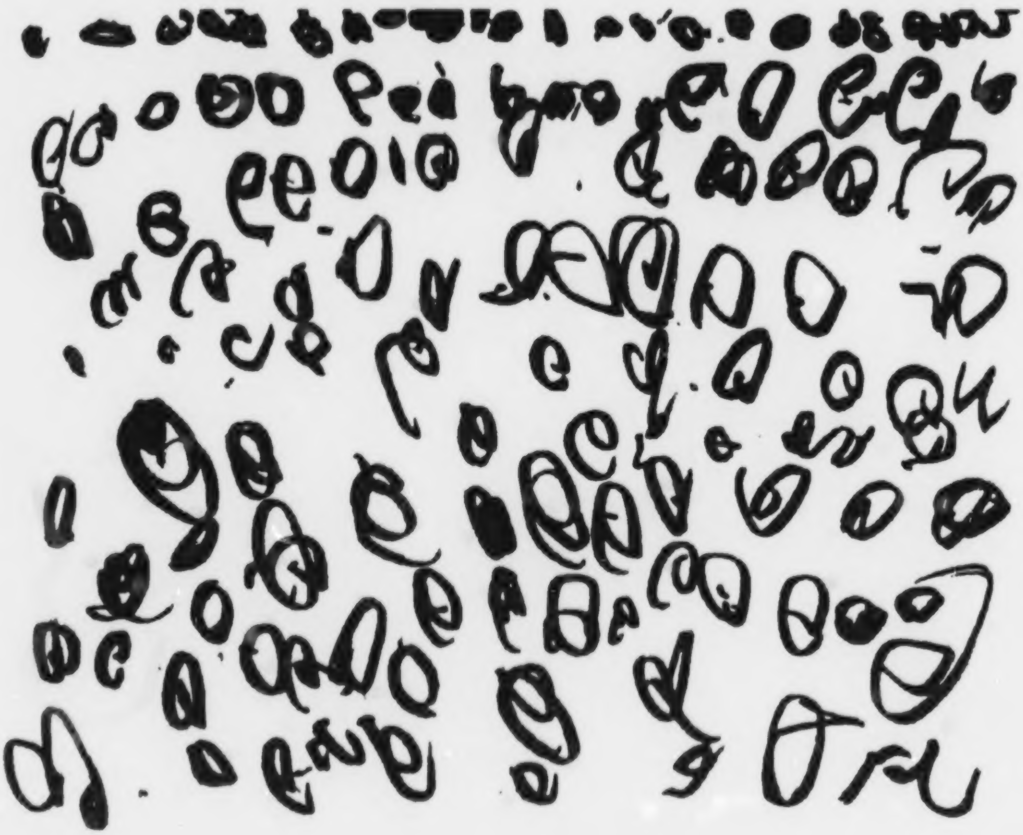


This is fun.

(Random and Controlled Scribbling)

Writing sample courtesy of Saint Bernardine Head Start in Baltimore, Maryland.

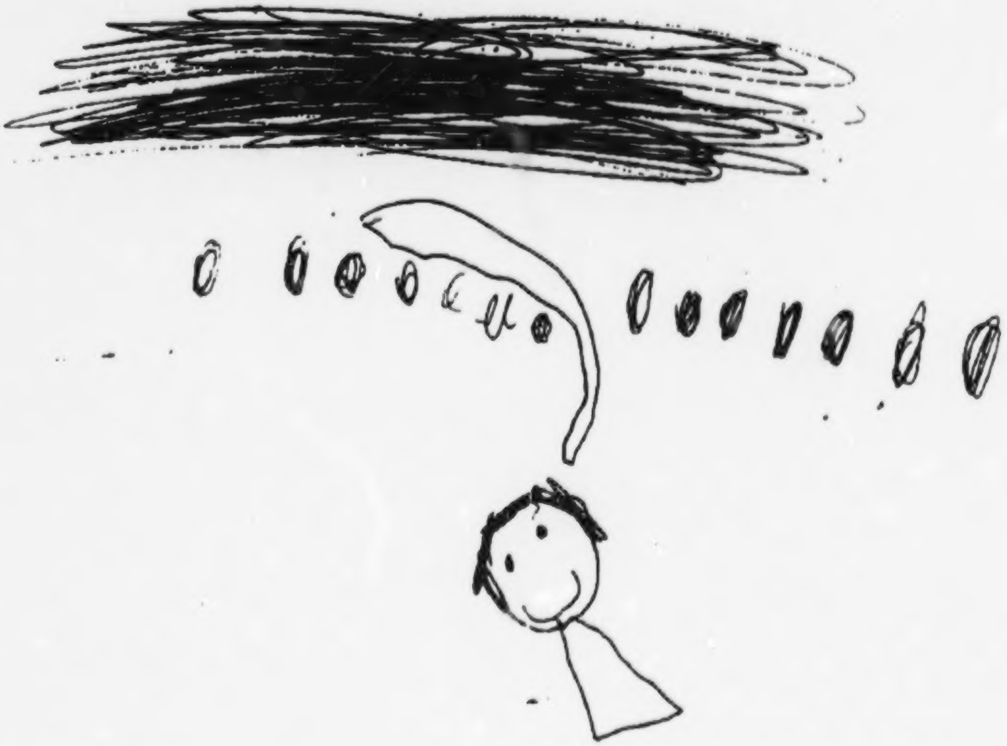
Handout 26: Children Learn about Writing (Continued)



A letter to grandma.
(Scribble Writing)

Writing sample courtesy of Saint Bernardine Head Start in Baltimore, Maryland.

Handout 26: Children Learn about Writing
(Continued)



Talking picture.
(Picture with Scribble Writing)

Writing sample courtesy of Saint Bernardine Head Start in Baltimore, Maryland.

Handout 27: Emerging Literacy Planning Web (Example)

Shared Experience or Interest
Follow up on visit to pet store where children were fascinated with fish.

Home
Add fish books to the classroom lending library. Talk with families about fish.

Library Area
Add fish books such as *The Rainbow Fish.*

Writing Area
Add fish stamps. Hang tuna fish preference chart so children can respond. After chart is done, graph.

Group Time
Read aloud fish books. Write their own fish story.

Outdoors
Set up water table filled with plastic fish.

Signs and Labels
Label aquariums. Write instructions for feeding fish. Encourage conversations about the fish.

Cooking/Snack
Use recipe cards to make tuna fish sandwiches.

Music
Learn to sing song teacher made up—I've Been Fishing at the Big Pier (to the tune of I've Been Working on the Railroad).

Science
Set up two aquariums—one with plants and one without. Observe differences. Teacher will write children's comments.

Computers
Draw fish pictures with graphics program.

Note: Use with Activity 4-4

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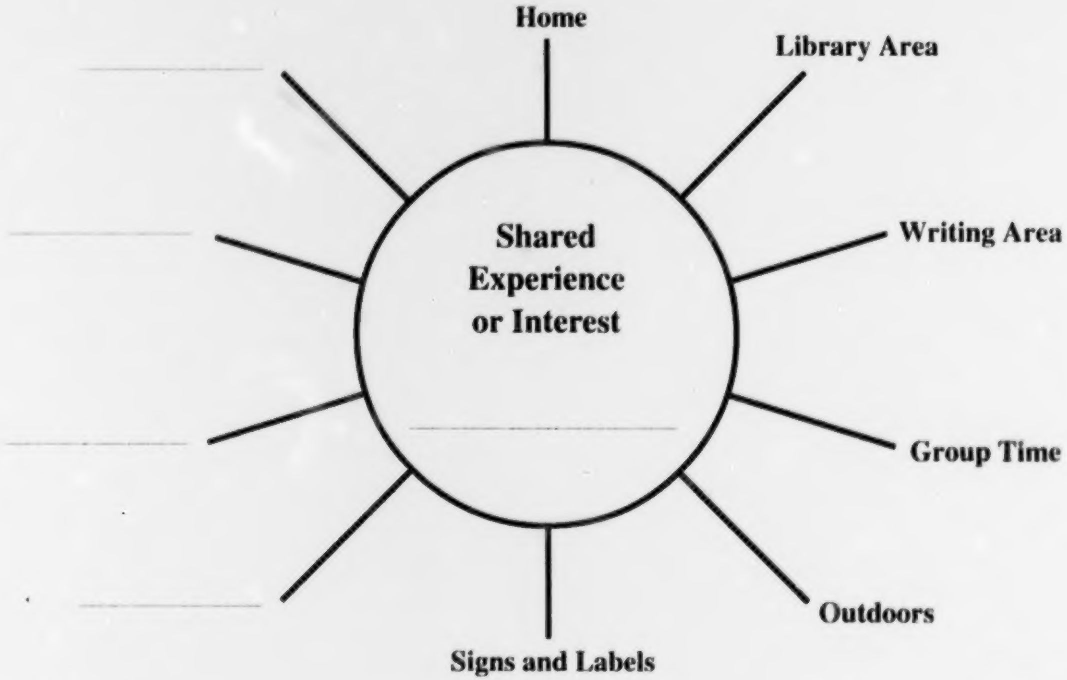
Handout 27: Emerging Literacy Planning Web (Continued)

Instructions: Think of an experience the children recently shared or something they seem particularly interested in. Use this web as a tool for planning ways to encourage children's emerging literacy while building on this experience or interest. Add interest areas from your classrooms in the blank spaces.* Implement your plan during the next week.


Home
Library Area
Writing Area
Group Time
Outdoors
Signs and Labels
Shared Experience or Interest

---

* For example, blocks, dramatic play, music, table toys, computers, science, cooking, movement.

Continuing Professional Development

Participants can undertake many activities to sustain and enhance the skills they develop through this guide. The following suggestions should be considered starting points.

CDA Program

The Child Development Associate (CDA) credential demonstrates competence in early childhood education. Administered by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition, it is considered the standard for the early childhood field. To learn about CDA requirements, call the Council at 800–424–4310 or write the Council at 2460 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009–3575.

College Courses

Many universities and community colleges offer courses in children's literature, child development, language development, and child study—many include in-depth information on enhancing children's language and literacy development. You can take these courses independently (for credit or audit) or for fulfilling requirements for the CDA or a degree. Courses can also be designed specifically for your Head Start program. To find out about course offerings or to request specific courses, contact the admissions, continuing education, or adult education departments of your local university or community college.

NBCDI

The National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) is a professional organization that advocates for black children. Its national membership addresses issues and policies that affect black children and their families. Its resources include a listing of books appropriate for use with young children. NBCDI publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Black Child Advocate*. For further information, call NBCDI at 202–387–1281 or write to NBCDI at 1463 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

Workshops/Training

In addition to workshops on language and emerging literacy, diversity, equity, and culture offered at national and regional conferences, a wide range of training opportunities are available. For further information, contact both of these organizations:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) at 202–232–8777 or 800–424–2460
- National Head Start Association (NHSA) at 703–739–0875

Most states have NAEYC and NHSA affiliate chapters that sponsor workshops throughout the year. If you have Internet access, check out the following World Wide Web (WWW) sites:

- NAEYC: http://www.naeyc.org/naeyc/
- NHSA: http://www.nhsa.org/

Continuing Professional Development

Conduct Workshops

Participants who become invested in the value of language and literacy may want to sponsor workshops on the topic. Taking a leadership role is one hallmark of strong and consistent professional development. Head Start staff could work through a community college, parent education program, local library, or family literacy program to offer a workshop on language and emerging literacy.

Develop Partnerships

Many community agencies operate family literacy programs. In order to enhance the skills of Head Start staff as they foster children's language and literacy development, partnerships may be developed with these literacy providers. The adult education division of your local education agency (LEA/public schools) and/or the local library system are appropriate first contacts regarding partnerships to explore the possibility of joint trainings.

The **America Reads Challenge** encourages communities throughout the country to recruit, train, and organize reading specialists, volunteer coordinators, and volunteers who will work directly with children from preschool through the third grade. Head Start programs are key partners in this national effort. Its primary goal is to make sure that all American children will be able to read well and independently by the end of the third grade.

Through America Reads, communities can expand current literacy initiatives or develop new reading partnerships. Many colleges and universities are supporting America Reads through their work-study programs. Learn how America Reads is being implemented in your community and meet with other staff and families to discuss ways that Head Start can get involved. To join the America Reads listserv, do the following:

- Send an e-mail message to Majordomo@etr-associates.org.
- Leave the subject line blank. (If your system requires you to include a subject, enter any text. It will be ignored.)
- In the body of the message, type: subscribe americareads.
- Turn off your signature file if you use one.

After joining, post your messages to AmericaReads@etr-associates.org.

Access this Web site to learn even more about America Reads and emerging literacy efforts:

http://www.bnkst.edu/americareads/americareads.html

Born to Read: How to Nurture a Baby's Love of Learning is a national demonstration project administered by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). The overall goal of Born to Read is to help parents raise children with healthy bodies and minds. Born to Read builds partnerships between libraries and health care providers to reach out to new and expectant *at-risk* parents and help them raise children who are *born to read*. For information about how to organize a Born to Read program in your community, contact:

Born to Read Project
Association for Library Service to Children
American Library Association
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Association of Youth Museums (AYM) is a professional service organization that endeavors to enhance the quality, expand the capacity, and further the vision of youth museums. AYM has worked on enhancing family literacy efforts in local communities.

Association of Youth Museums
1775 K Street NW, Suite 595
Washington, DC 20006
202-466-4144

The works cited below have collectively influenced the field's understanding of emerging literacy and provide the philosophical underpinnings of many of the activities in this guide. It is recommended that the trainer be familiar with the works' basic contents and make their availability known to participants who need further information. Items marked with an asterisk (*) were used as references in the development of this guide.

Anderson, M. Parker. "Frequently Asked Questions about NAEYC's Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Position Paper."** ***Young Children **51 (January 1996), 13–16.**

The author provides answers to questions teachers are likely to ask about the National Association for the Education of Young Children Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Position Paper.

Barclay, Kathy, Cecelia Benelli, and Ann Curtis. "Literacy Begins at Birth: What Caregivers Can Learn from Parents of Children Who Read Early." ***Young Children*** **50 (May 1995), 24–29.**

This article focuses on strategies for encouraging the emerging literacy of infants and toddlers in center settings.

Brizius, Jack A., and Susan A. Foster, sponsored by the National Center for Family Literacy. ***Generation to Generation: Realizing the Promise of Family Literacy.*** **Ypsilanti, Mich.: High Scope Press, 1993.**

This book provides a history of family literacy programs that have operated in the United States since 1985. Topics addressed include research results on the effect of family literacy initiatives, the development of local and state family literacy programs, and the steps needed to expand the family literacy movement in the future.

Children's Literacy Initiative.** ***Creating a Classroom Literacy Environment. **Philadelphia: Children's Literacy Initiative, 1992.**

This resource is for Head Start teachers who want to improve their literacy environments. Photographs of center classrooms highlight key points.

Cullinan, Bernice E.** ***Read to Me: Raising Kids Who Love to Read. **New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1992.**

This work offers parents clear guidance on how to encourage the reading and writing skills of children beginning from preschool through the school-age years. The suggested strategies are practical and inexpensive and can be incorporated into a family's daily routines. An appendix lists recommended children's magazines and books.

Friedberg, Joan. "Helping Today's Toddlers Become Tomorrow's Readers: A Pilot Parent Participation Project through a Pittsburgh Health Agency." ***Young Children*** **44 (January 1989), 13–16.**

This article describes an innovative project that provided books and literacy education materials to families with young children and established children's libraries at health clinics.

Genishi, Celia. "Children's Language: Learning Words from Experience." ***Young Children*** **44 (November 1988), 16–23.**

This article is part of *Young Children*'s Research in Review series. The author discusses established and new theories about children's language development.

Gibson, Linda. ***Literacy Learning in the Early Years.*** **New York: Teachers College Press, 1989.**

The author devotes separate sections to children's development of language and literacy skills at different ages—from birth through age two, three-year-olds, four- and five-year-olds, and the primary years. Each age-specific part of the book discusses the characteristics of language development and the role of home and child development programs and schools.

Gottschall, Susan M. "Hug-a-Book: A Program to Nurture a Young Child's Love of Books and Reading." ***Young Children*** **50 (May 1995), 29–35.**

This article describes a program that provides books and literacy training to Head Start and child care sites in Chicago.

Hansen, Merrily P., and Gloria Armstrong. ***Right at Home, Family Experiences for Building Literacy.***

This unique book presents a series of letters to families about how they can use daily routines and activities to help their child learn the skills they need to become successful in school and in life. The reproducible letters are written in simple language and use a cartoon-style format. Families from various backgrounds are depicted in the book. Head Start programs can use this book to support family literacy efforts.

Harding, Nadine. "Family Journals: The Bridge from School to Home and Back Again." *Young Children* 51 (January 1996), 27–30.

The author of this article is a prekindergarten teacher at an elementary school in New York City. She describes how to use family journals to keep in touch with families and share information about children's activities and learning at home and at school.

Harris, Violet J. "Multicultural Curriculum: African American Children's Literature." *Young Children* 46 (January 1991), 37–44.

Part of *Young Children*'s Research in Review series, this article describes the history and current status of *culturally conscious* African American children's literature. The author discusses the importance of giving children the opportunity to see themselves in books and offering all children experiences with authentic African American children's literature.

Jalongo, Mary Renck. *Young Children and Picture Books: Literature from Infancy to Six.* Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988.

The author discusses the characteristics of high-quality children's literature and explains how these books contribute to young children's development and learning.

Manalson, Ayola, Helen Buck, and Claire Watson. *It Takes Two to Talk: A Hanen Early Language Parent Guidebook.* Toronto: The Hanen Centre, 1992.

This publication offers guidance to parents on encouraging their children's language development. The natural, intuitive approach presented in this book is based on universal principles of language learning.

Mathews, Virginia, Susan Roman, and Marcia Trotta. *The Library-Head Start Partnership, Video for Programs and Workshops* and *Guide to the Use of the Library-Head Start Partnership, Video for Programs and Workshops.* Washington, D.C.: The Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 1993.

The development of this video and user's guide is a result of the Library-Head Start Partnership project. The partnership is administered through a joint agreement between the Center for the Book, Library of Congress, and the Head Start Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The video is designed to help Head Start staff build effective partnerships with librarians who serve young children. These librarians are also a target audience.

Mavragones, Nancy A. "Helping Parents Help Their Children Become Literate." ***Young Children*** **45 (May 1990), 4–9.**

This article offers parents tips about how they can help their children learn to read and write. The tips are practical and easy to do and require little extra time or few materials.

McGee, Lea M., and Donald J. Richgels.** ***Literacy's Beginnings, Supporting Young Readers and Writers**, 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996.**

This textbook addresses children's literacy learning from infancy through the early elementary school years. Examples based on the author's firsthand observations of children's literacy learning accompany the information in each chapter.

McLane, Joan Brooks, and Gillian Dowly McNamee.** ***Early Literacy**. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990.**

The authors define literacy; describe the children's activities and experiences that serve as bridges to literacy; discuss the development of reading and writing skills; and explain how home, community, and child development program settings all contribute to literacy learning.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. "Position Statement: Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity—Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education."** ***Young Children **51 (January 1996), 4–12.**

This article presents the position statement and makes recommendations for professional preparation, programs and practices, how to work with children, and how to work with families.

Nelson, Carol J., Nancy C. Deringer, Marty J. Denham, M. Bryce Fifield, Brenda McGuire, Laura Fifield, and Karin Skogerboe. ***Head Start Emergent Literacy Project, Training Module*****. Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho, 1996.**

Developed under a grant from the Head Start Bureau, these print and video materials include a training manual with three modules—*Working with Families*, *Classroom Environment and Practices*, and *Supporting Emergent Literacy Practices at the Local Level*. Four videotapes support the manual—*Emergent Literacy: What and Why?*, *Creating a Print Rich Environment*, *Creating a Classroom That Supports Emergent Writing*,

and *Creating a Literate Environment in the* Home. These materials can be ordered from the Internet:
http://www.ets.uidaho.edu/icdd/emerlit/modules.htm

Quintero, Elizabeth, and M. Cristina Velarde. "Intergenerational Literacy: A Developmental, Bilingual Approach." ***Young Children*** **45 (May 1990), 10–15.**

The authors describe a pilot literacy program for parents of young children. Parents learned how to help their children with reading, improve their own literacy skills, and complete suggested home activities and literacy behaviors. Parents were encouraged to attend individual, weekly classes on reading in Spanish and English to benefit themselves and their children.

Raines, Shirley C., and Robert J. Canady. ***Story S-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-r-s: Activities to Expand Children's Favorite Books*** **and** ***More Story S-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-r-s.*** **Mt. Rainier, Md.: Gryphon House, 1989 and 1991.**

These resources offer numerous suggestions for activities and experiences that enhance children's enjoyment and understanding of popular books. The suggestions allow staff to incorporate literature in various classroom interest areas, outdoor activities, group time, and the entire curriculum.

Roskos, Kathleen A., and Susan B. Neuman. "Of Scribbles, Schemas, and Storybooks: Using Literacy Albums to Document Young Children's Literacy Growth." ***Young Children*** **49 (January 1994), 78–85.**

The authors of this article explain how teachers can use literacy albums as an assessment tool to document each child's literacy growth.

Roskos, Kathleen A., Carol Vukelich, James F. Christie, Billie J. Enz, and Susan B. Neumann. ***Linking Literacy and Play.*** **Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1995.**

This training package includes a 12-minute video, a facilitator's guide, and a 10-book packet of readings. The video presents ideas on using the natural environment of play to foster literacy development. The facilitator's guide provides ideas and insights on how to combine literacy and play. The readings support the concepts and practices presented in the video.

Rybczynski, Marcia, and Anne Troy. "Literacy-Enriched Play Centers: Trying Them Out in ***The Real World."*** ***Childhood Education*** **72 (Fall 1995), 7–12.**

This article describes the creation of literacy-rich interest areas and the literacy explorations children engage in when reading and writing materials are available in the environment.

***Schickedanz, Judith A. *More Than the ABCs: The Early Stages of Reading and Writing.* Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1986.**

This book focuses on introducing books and writing to children beginning from birth through the preschool years. The final chapter explains how to organize the environment to support literacy development.

Soto, Lourdes Diaz. "Understanding Bilingual/Bicultural Young Children." *Young Children* 46 (January 1991), 30–36.

This article is part of *Young Children*'s Research in Review series. The author discusses established and new theories about the language learning of bilingual and bicultural children.

***Spodek, Bernard, and Olivia N. Saracho, editors. *Language and Literacy in Early Childhood Education.* New York: Teacher's College Press, 1993.**

The eleven contributors to this volume discuss separate topics related to literacy learning. The topics addressed include assessment, biliteracy, multicultural children's literature, and the role of parents.

***Strickland, Dorothy S., and Lesley Mandel Morrow, editors. *Emerging Literacy.* Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1989.**

Developed under the sponsorship of the International Reading Association, this book is available through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Experts in early childhood language and literacy development authored the twelve chapters. Each chapter addresses a different aspect of emerging literacy and the kinds of support that families and Head Start staff can provide to encourage children's literacy discoveries.

***Teale, William H., and Miriam G. Martinez. "Getting on the Right Road to Reading: Bringing Books and Young Children Together in the Classroom." *Young Children* 44 (November 1988), 10–15.**

The authors explain developmentally appropriate practices that preschool teachers can use to encourage literacy. The article describes reading aloud to small groups, the classroom library, and children's emergent reading.

***deVilliers, Peter A., and Jill G. deVilliers. *Early Language*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979.**

This book provides a detailed discussion of how children learn to understand and use oral language during the period between birth and the preschool years. Real examples accompany language development theories and bring them to life.

Walker-Dalhouse, Doris. "Beginning Reading and the African American Child at Risk." *Young Children* 49 (November, 1993), 24–28.

The author describes the typical culturally related strengths and interests of African-American children and offers strategies for creating literacy experiences that respond to children as individuals.

***Weitzman, Elaine. *Learning Language and Loving It: A Guide to Promoting Children's Social and Language Development in Early Childhood Settings*. Toronto: The Hanen Centre, 1992.**

This practical resource is based on an on-site training program for early childhood staff in Canada. The book covers language learning beginning from birth through the preschool years. Much of the book is devoted to the importance of encouraging children's spoken language skills. The examples, illustrations, and graphics make the book extremely clear and readable.

***Whitmore, Kathryn, and Yetta M. Goodman. "Transforming Curriculum in Language and Literacy." Sue Bredekamp and Teresa Rosegrant, editors. *Reaching Potentials: Transforming Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment*, Vol. 2. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1996. 145–166.**

This chapter describes the continuum of language and literacy development and suggests strategies that teachers can use to make the curriculum culturally and individually appropriate.

***Williams, Richard P., and Judith K. Davis. "Lead Sprightly into Literacy." *Young Children* 49 (May 1994), 37–41.**

This article presents a discussion of emerging literacy and the developmentally appropriate practices for encouraging child-centered language experiences.

Resources

Wolter, Deborah L. "Whole Group Story Reading?"** ***Young Children **48 (November 1992), 72–75.**

This useful article offers a step-by-step approach to preparing to read aloud to a group of children and makes suggestions for encouraging children's active participation in these experiences.

Head Start Publication

The following publication is available at no cost to all Head Start programs. Look for it in your program or center library. If your program does not have this resource, ask your Head Start director to mail or fax a written request to the Head Start Publications Center. Be sure to include the Head Start grant number. Catalogs and order forms are available from:

Head Start Publications Center
P. O. Box 26417
Alexandria, VA 22313-0417
Fax: 703-683-5769

O'Brien, Jim. ***Promoting Family Literacy through Head Start.*** **Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1991.**

This publication (DHHS Publication No. [ACF] 91-31266) explores the reasons why Head Start must address family literacy. It includes strategies for promoting family literacy and a summary of the insights gained from the Head Start Literacy Demonstration projects. The appendix lists family literacy resources and private and government-sponsored literacy organizations.

Department of Education Publications

The ***Helping Your Child*** **series. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.**

Each booklet in this series is addressed to families and includes simple strategies for supporting different aspects of children's development and learning. The books are available in English and Spanish. The following titles are related to language and literacy:

> ***Cullinan, Bernice, and Brod Bagert.** ***Helping Your Child Learn to Read.*** **1993.**
>
> ***Paulu, Nancy.** ***Helping Your Child Get Ready for School.*** **1992.**
>
> ***Perkinson, Kathryn.** ***Helping Your Child Use the Library.*** **1993.**

A poster, **Helping Your Baby Learn to Talk**, is also available.

Read*Write*Now, U. S. Department of Education.

Several publications of this initiative are appropriate for Head Start children and families.

Activities for Reading and Writing Fun is designed for use with children from birth to grade 6.

Play on Paper introduces younger children to beginning reading concepts.

The *Ready*Set*Read Early Childhood Learning Kit* includes the following items:

> *Ready*Set* Read for Families* (early childhood language activities for children from birth through age five)
>
> *Ready*Set*Read for Caregivers* (early childhood language activities for children from birth through age five)
>
> Early Childhood Activity Calendar (tips and general activities that promote reading and language skills for young children)
>
> Early Childhood Growth Chart (families and caregivers can use this to follow a child's height and promote language development).

Call 800–USA–LEARN for more information or download these publications from the Department of Education Web site: http://www.ed.gov.inits

Additional Resources

Head Start staff and families have many resources that they can consult to find out more about supporting literacy. The following is a brief list:

The Adult Literacy Resource Book

This free catalog is distributed by the New Readers Press, the publishing division of Laubach Literacy International. To obtain a copy, contact:

New Reader's Press
Special Catalog Request Department
P.O. Box 131
Syracuse, NY 13210
800–448–8878

A.L.L. Points

This bimonthly bulletin concerns adult learning and literacy. It contains descriptions of adult literacy programs and resources and describes new developments and publications in the field. To be placed on a mailing list, write to:

The U.S. Department of Education
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
Washington, DC 20202–72401
(FACTSLINE: 202–401–9570)

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy
1002 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20007
202–338–2006

The foundation's goals are to establish literacy as a value in American homes and to break intergenerational cycles of illiteracy. The foundation's book, *First Teachers*, describes successful programs, contacts, and additional sources of information about literacy.

Bell Atlantic ALA Family Literacy Project

American Library Association
Bell Atlantic ALA Family Literacy Project
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611
312–944–6780

This project encourages libraries to develop and enhance library-based family literacy projects for the urban and rural poor and for ethnic minorities. Because the concept of family literacy is new, this project has developed fact sheets that address the various aspects of starting a family literacy project. The fact sheets include names, addresses, and phone numbers for contact persons. Single copies are available free by calling 800–545–2433, ext. 4296.

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC is the world's largest education information system. Established in 1966, it is supported by the U.S. Department of Education. Call toll-free (800–LET–ERIC) to receive information about the sixteen ERIC clearinghouses, to obtain a catalog of publications, and to learn about other ERIC components. Six ERIC clearinghouses supply information about literacy, including journal articles, local resources, and literacy publications:

Adult, Career, and Vocational Education
Ohio State University
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1090
614-292-4353 or 800-848-4815
Web Site: http:www.acs.ohio-state.edu/inits/education/cete/ericave/index/html

Disabilities and Gifted Education
Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091-1589
800-328-0272
Web Site: http://www.cec.sped.org/ericec/

Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois,
College of Education
805 West Pennsylvania Avenue
Urbana, IL 61801-4897
217-333-1386 or 800-583-4135
Web Site: http://ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/ericeece.html

Languages and Linguistics*
Center for Applied Linguistics
1118 22nd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037-0037
202-429-9292 or 800-276-9834

* Includes an adjunct clearinghouse on literacy education for limited English proficient adults.

Reading, English, and Communication
Indiana University
Smith Research Center
Suite 150
2805 East 10th Street
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698
812-855-5847 or 800-759-4723
Web Site: http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec

Urban Education
Institute for Urban and Minority Education
Box 40, Teachers College
Columbia University
New York, NY 10027
800-601-4868
Web Site: http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu

International Reading Association (IRA)

The IRA is dedicated to improving reading and literacy skills worldwide. They publish a journal, *The Reading Teacher*, and print and video resources on emergent literacy and reading. For a copy of the IRA catalog of publications, contact:

International Reading Association
Order Department
800 Barksdale Road
P.O. Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714-8139
302-731-1600

Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA)

Literacy Volunteers of America
5795 Widewaters Parkway
Syracuse, NY 13214
315-445-8000

LVA has more than 200 affiliates working to teach adults to read and to train tutors. The organization publishes a directory of its affiliate programs across the United States. A nonprofit organization, LVA has more than 350 programs that train and support literacy tutor volunteers. It also provides curriculum materials and programming ideas for adult and family literacy projects.

National Center for Family Literacy

National Center for Family Literacy
Suite 610
401 South Fourth Avenue
Louisville, KY 40202
502-584-1133

This nonprofit organization was established to expand efforts to solve the nation's literacy problems through family literacy programs. The National Center for Family Literacy provides information, training, materials, and technical assistance to new and established family literacy programs. It is affiliated with the Keenan Trust Family Literacy Project.

Reach Out and Read (ROR) Program

Reach Out and Read National Training Site .
Boston City Hospital, Maternity 5
818 Harrison Avenue
Boston, MA 02118
617-534-5701

Physicians and early childhood educators at Boston City Hospital created the first ROR Program for children ages six months to six years. Through funding from the Annie E. Casey, William T. Grant, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundations and the Association of American Publishers, Boston City Hospital is a national training site for similar pediatric early literacy programs. As of January 1997, there were eighty-three ROR sites in thirty-three states.

ROR integrates literacy development into regular pediatric care. In the waiting room, volunteers read to children and model read-aloud techniques. In the examination room, the pediatrician or nurse practitioner looks at a book with the child and encourages parents to use books to support their child's healthy development. After each visit, children are invited to take home a new book for their home library.

Reading is Fundamental (RIF)

Reading is Fundamental (RIF)
600 Maryland Avenue, SW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20024
Phone: 202-287-3220
Fax: 202-287-3196
Web Site: http://www.si.edu/rif

RIF is the largest and best-known nonprofit children's literacy organization in the United States. Since its founding more than thirty years ago, RIF has distributed more than 163 million books. The primary mission of RIF is to ensure that all children have access to books and the motivation to read them. They undertake a variety of projects designed to support this mission by supporting child and family literacy efforts.

Read With Me and *Read With Me. . .The Teacher-Parent Partnership* are videos developed by RIF. The first of these videos, *Read With Me*, features two families whose preschoolers are enrolled in Head Start. The 10-minute video explains the importance of reading aloud with young children and offers practical tips. The companion video, *Read With Me . . . The Teacher-Parent Partnership*, was filmed in two Head Start classrooms. The focus is on reading aloud and providing the literacy-related props, materials, and activities that enhance children's enjoyment of books. An "author's tea" shows children reading their hand-made books to their families.

The following pamphlets are included in the *RIF Guides for Parents* series. Each pamphlet offers simple strategies in a reader-friendly format. Head Start programs can contact RIF at the above address to order copies and to learn more about becoming a RIF program.

Building a Family Library
Choosing Good Books for Children: Infancy to Age 12
Encouraging Soon-to-Be Readers: How to Excite Preschoolers about Books
Encouraging Young Writers
Family Storytelling: Sharing Stories and Reading Happily Ever After
Reading Aloud to Your Children
Magazines and Family Reading
Upbeat and Offbeat Activities to Encourage Reading

SER Family Learning Centers (FLCs)

SER Family Learning Centers of SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc.
Suite 200
100 Decker Drive
Irving, TX 75062
972-541-0616

FLCs focus on Hispanic literacy training for preschoolers, adolescents, welfare parents, and senior citizens. The SER literacy campaign places special emphasis on the needs of Hispanics in the areas of education, training, employment, business, and economic opportunities.

U.S. Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education has the following three offices dedicated to fostering literacy:

Clearinghouse on Adult Education

Clearinghouse on Adult Education
Division of Adult Education
Mary E. Switzer Building
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
202-732-2412

Maintained by the Division of Adult Education, the clearinghouse offers free information on family literacy. Available publications include fact sheets, descriptions of family literacy programs, and bibliographies.

Even Start Program

Even Start Program
Compensatory Education Programs
Room 2043
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
202-732-4682

The family-oriented education projects are funded under the Even Start program. The projects are designed to help parents become partners in the education of their children while providing them with literacy instructions. Local school districts in all states are eligible to apply for funds.

Library Literacy Programs

Library Literacy Programs
Office of Library Programs
Suite 400
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001-2029

The Library Literacy Program provides state and local public libraries with grants to support literacy programs. In fiscal year 1988, 244 library literacy projects were funded, and five percent of these provided family literacy activities. Various approaches to family literacy are represented in the library literacy projects that link libraries with parents and children in several states. State and local public libraries are eligible to apply for funds.

Appendix A

Responding to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Children and Families*

Background

The term *linguistically and culturally diverse* is used by the U.S. Department of Education and other educators to identify children from homes and communities where the primary language used for communication is other than English. Head Start programs throughout the United States enroll children and families who are linguistically and culturally diverse. When Head Start staff acknowledge and support this diversity, children are encouraged to retain skills in their home language, while learning to understand and use a second language at Head Start.

The Home Language

Most children begin their Head Start experiences with some skills in their home language—the language their family uses to communicate with each other. Whether the home language is English or another, it is the language children have learned since birth. Children use their home language to establish relationships with family and friends, to express their ideas and feelings, and to think and make sense of their world. Families pass on cultural values, beliefs, and traditions using their home language. Clearly, each child's home language is an important part of his or her identity and abilities. It is most likely the language the family uses to communicate complex ideas and feelings.

Some parents are afraid that using their home language with their child will get in the way of their child's mastery of a second language. Actually, it is one of the best ways to support a child who is learning a second language. When children have strong skills in one language, they can use these skills to become proficient in a second language. Knowing how to communicate in more than one language is an asset children will use throughout their lives.

Suggested Strategies

When parents and Head Start staff collaborate, they can ensure that children continue to develop skills in the home language while acquiring skills in English. The following are some suggested tips and strategies for accomplishing this goal:

- Recognize that all children's thinking, language, and emotional skills are connected to their home language and culture.

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* Based on "National Association for the Education of Young Children Position Statement: Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity—Recommendations for Effective Early Education," *Young Children* 51 (January 1996), 4–22.

Appendix A

- Celebrate children's strengths and provide numerous ways for them to express their ideas, feelings, and knowledge through art, music, sensory experiences, dramatic play, block building, and outdoor play.
- Understand that it takes a long time to learn a second language. Encourage children to become experts in using their first language so they can use these skills to make sense of the complexities of a second language.
- Involve parents in planning and implementing the Head Start curriculum. Ask parents to share linguistic and cultural experiences, songs, rhymes, stories, art, music, and books with the staff and children.
- Invite parents to become volunteers. Make sure they know that they are welcome and that their contributions are appreciated.
- Develop partnerships with parents and share information about children's activities and interests at home and in Head Start settings. These partnerships help maintain linguistic and cultural continuity between home and Head Start settings.
- Encourage parents to speak to children in their home language. Explain that they are building loving relationships, modeling how to speak their language, and passing on their culture's values and traditions, books, rhymes, songs, and stories.
- Include examples of children's home languages in the Head Start environment. Use appropriate languages and reading levels for parent information boards and notices. Write signs and make labels in home languages and English. Include books, tapes, and other materials that reflect linguistic and cultural diversity.
- Speak to children in their home languages as much as you can. If you do not speak a child's home language, ask the parents to help you learn a few important words and phrases in the language. Observe a child's reactions to hearing you use comforting words in her home language.
- Encourage children who speak the same home language to play together.

- Help children understand spoken English by:
  - Holding frequent one-on-one conversations
  - Speaking slowly and clearly
  - Using simple sentences and vocabulary
  - Repeating *important words* with emphasis
  - Talking about what is happening in the present
  - Using gestures to clarify words and provide more information

Appendix B

Strategies for Supporting Children with Speech or Language Delays or Disorders*

Possible Warning Signs

When a young child's language skills do not improve over time, he or she may have a specific problem that needs to be addressed by professionals who work in conjunction with the child's family and Head Start staff. There may be a physical abnormality in the teeth, palate, or vocal cords; a hearing problem; or a speech disorder such as lisping. The following are signs of possible speech or language delays or disorders:

- By age two, the child is not talking at all.
- After age three, the child's speech cannot be understood.
- After age three, the child leaves off many beginning consonants (for example, *og* instead of *dog*).
- The child uses mostly vowel sounds.
- The child is embarrassed and disturbed by his or her speech.
- The child's voice is a monotone, too loud or too soft, or very difficult to understand, suggesting that there may be a hearing loss.
- The child sounds as if he or she is talking through the nose or suffering from a cold.

If a child exhibits any of these signs, he or she may need to be evaluated by a speech pathologist. Head Start staff can share their observations with families and obtain their written permission to make a referral for a complete language development evaluation. As with any assessment of a child's abilities, the setting, instruments, techniques, and interpretation of results should be culturally appropriate. For more information, see *Appendix B: Culturally Appropriate Assessment* in the Head Start Training Guide *Individualizing: A Plan for Success*. See the Training Guide for the Head Start Learning Community, *Well Child Health Care* for more information on speech and language screening.

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* Based on Sue Schwartz, Ph.D., and Joan E. Heller Miller, Ed.M., *The New Language of Toys: Teaching Communication Skills to Children with Special Needs, a Guide for Parents and Teachers* (Rockville, Md.: Woodbine House, 1996), 21, 33–37; and Elaine Weitzman, *Learning Language and Loving It: A Guide to Promoting Children's Social and Language Development in Early Childhood Settings* (Toronto: The Hanen Centre, 1992), 198–200.

Appendix B

Suggested Strategies

Head Start staff and families can use the following strategies to help children whose oral language skills are at an earlier stage than most children of the same age:*

Start with simple words and phrases. This will help children gain the receptive language skills that are the foundation for the expressive language that comes later.

Use the real names for objects. For example, say *blanket* not *bankie*.

Repeat key words, concepts, and rules of grammar again and again over a short period of time. For example, a teacher may say to a child who is eating an apple, *Your apple is red. It's a red apple. Does your red apple taste sweet?* Most children need to hear the same word thousands of times before they can speak it.

Emphasize a word or phrase by putting it at the beginning or end of a sentence. This helps a child pay attention to the word or phrase. For example, you could say, *The button is shiny. The pie pan is shiny. The necklace is shiny.*

Use contrasts to highlight words a child is learning to use appropriately. For example, to model the use of *in* and *out*, you can play a game with hula hoops placed on the floor—*Cameron is* ***in*** *the hoop. Nina is* ***in*** *the hoop. Tracey is* ***in*** *the hoop. Lori is* ***out*** *of the hoop.*

Respond to a child's communication as quickly as possible. For example, Donnie points to the torn page in his book and says, *Book broken.* While Donnie is still paying attention to the book, his grandmother responds immediately, *Yes, the page is torn. There is a torn page in the book.* Then she invites Donnie to help her tape the page. If she had repaired the book without responding, Donnie might have moved on to another activity. By the time she responded, he may not have made the connection between what he said and what she said.

Speak in short sentences. As a child's language skills improve, gradually increase the length and complexity of the sentences you speak.

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*These strategies can also be helpful for young children who are strengthening their language skills.

Talk at a slower rate than you normally do. This gives children enough time to hear what you say and how you say it and try to figure out what it means.

Pause between phrases and sentences. Your pauses give a child time to make sense of what you say and to think of a response.

Use specific names for items as children's language skills grow. This helps children learn how to generalize. For example, say *Would you like some oatmeal?* rather than *Would you like some cereal?*

Use daily events and activities to model and reinforce language use. The daily life of a home or classroom offers many opportunities for children to practice using language. Adults can listen and respond in ways that guide children's language learning.

For more information and materials on speech and language screening, see the Training Guide for the Head Start Learning Community, *Well Child Health Care*, or contact the following organizations:

American Speech-Language Hearing Association
10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: 800-638-8255 or 301-897-8682

The Hanen Centre
252 Bloor Street West
Suite 3-390
Toronto, ONT M5S IV5 Canada
Phone: 416-921-1073
Fax: 416-921-1225
E-mail: info@hanen.org
Web Site: http://www.hanen.org/carconn.html

Appendix C

Emerging Literacy: From Cooing to Conventional Reading and Writing*

Stage One	**From Birth to about Three Months, Many Newborns:**	**Adults Can:**
I communicate through reflexes.	▪ Communicate reflexively through crying and other actions ▪ Cry in different ways, depending on what is needed (diaper change, food, company) ▪ Appear startled by loud noises ▪ Turn head toward familiar voices ▪ Show a preference for human voices and music ▪ Coo, gurgle, smile, and laugh to themselves ▪ Coo and smile back and forth with adults ▪ Smile upon hearing friendly voices ▪ Listen and respond to sounds and voices ▪ Start interactions with other people ▪ Enjoy listening to a favorite person read aloud	▪ Respond as if babies know the effect of their sounds and actions ▪ Smile and coo back at babies' smiles and coos to introduce the give and take of human communications ▪ Smile with and talk to babies so they know they are loved ▪ Recite rhymes and sing songs with babies ▪ Read aloud to babies

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*Based in part on K. Eileen Allen and Lynn Marotz, *Developmental Profiles: Pre-birth through Eight* (Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers, 1994), 39, 55–57, 63–64, 73–74, 80–81, 91–94, 99–102, 108–110, and Elaine Weitzman, *Learning Language and Loving It: A Guide to Promoting Children's Social and Language Development in Early Childhood Settings* (Toronto: The Hanen Centre, 1992), 49–65.

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Stage Two	From about Three to Eight Months, Many Babies:	Adults Can:
I discover that other people are interesting.	▪ Cry, make sounds, move their bodies, and use facial expressions to communicate (for example, wave their arms when excited) ▪ May not know that they can send direct messages to other people ▪ Understand nonverbal cues such as smiles even though they do not understand the meaning of spoken words ▪ Smile and frown ▪ Gurgle, growl, and squeal to themselves ▪ Respond to simple, familiar requests and their own names ▪ Respond to nonverbal cues such as pointing ▪ Begin babbling at six or seven months ▪ Repeat consonants and vowel sounds such as *mamama* ▪ Produce all the sounds found in their home language ▪ Use their senses to explore books ▪ Listen to rhymes and songs	▪ Continue using any of the above strategies that are still appropriate for this age group ▪ Interpret babies' communications and respond accordingly ▪ Play games such as peek-a-boo and make sounds back and forth ▪ Communicate with words and nonverbal cues (for example, point to the high chair and say, *Are you ready to eat?*) ▪ Use babies' names when talking with them ▪ Continue reading, talking, and singing with babies ▪ Provide cloth, soft vinyl, and/or cardboard books (expect that babies will put them in their mouths)

Stage Three	From about Eight to Thirteen Months, Many Babies:	Adults Can:
I use gestures to tell you many things.	▪ Understand that their sounds and actions cause others to respond ▪ Use gestures—pointing, shaking their heads, and looking back and forth at another person—to ask questions, make requests, seek attention, say *hello*, and get someone to pay attention to the same thing they are looking at ▪ Understand and respond to gestures, facial expressions, and changes in voice tone ▪ Understand the meaning of a few words ▪ Babble to themselves and other people ▪ Produce long strings of sounds that sound like real words; use some sounds as if they were words ▪ Imitate sounds made by other people ▪ Take turns while talking, playing, and singing with another person ▪ Use a finger and thumb to pick up objects; hold and use toys and objects such as rattles, spoons, and large crayons; and transfer objects from one hand to the other ▪ Enjoy looking at books and listening to stories with adults ▪ Turn pages in sturdy board, cloth, and vinyl books ▪ Begin to understand that objects and events pictured in books are the same as those in their own world	▪ Continue using any of the above strategies that are still appropriate for this age group ▪ Respond to babies' requests so they know they are loved and cared for ▪ Talk to babies about what they seem to be saying—*Do you want to sit in my lap? Let me lift you up so we can cuddle together.* ▪ Look at and name things with a baby (for example, hold a baby at the window to watch a truck go by) ▪ Continue using speech and gestures when talking with children or giving simple directions (for example, *Now use the paper towel to wipe your other hand.*) ▪ Sing songs and play games that involve taking turns and handing objects back and forth ▪ Continue reading, talking, and singing with babies ▪ Provide books with easy-to-turn pages (expect that babies will put them in their mouths.) ▪ Introduce large crayons and paper and demonstrate how to use the crayons to make marks on paper ▪ Name the objects babies point to—*That's a banana. Do you want some banana?*

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Stage Four	**From about Twelve to Eighteen Months, Many Toddlers:**	**Adults Can:**
I begin to talk.	▪ Say a few words that refer to interesting people, things, and actions ▪ Use the same word to mean different things by varying the tone of their voices and adding gestures ▪ Point to pictures in books or to objects, upon request ▪ Continue to babble while learning to speak ▪ Use a single word to refer to a specific person or object (*bankie* means a blanket) or to refer to things with similar characteristics (*doggie* means all four-legged animals) ▪ Understand and respond to their own name, a few familiar words, and simple requests ▪ Repeat themselves or try a different approach if their communications do not get the desired response ▪ Like books about familiar objects, animals, people, and events ▪ Jump up to get an object like the one pictured in a book ▪ Enjoy bedtime reading sessions ▪ Scribble with crayons and markers	▪ Continue using any of the above strategies that are still appropriate for this age group ▪ Show excitement when toddlers learn new words ▪ Continue providing the names for objects and actions ▪ Respond to a toddler's one-word communication by stating it as a full sentence (for example, a child says, *Mama* while pointing at the door and tilting her head to one side. Her teacher responds, *That's right. Your mama went to class. She'll be back soon.*) ▪ Congratulate toddlers when they follow directions—*Thank you for handing me the diaper.* ▪ Pay attention to toddlers to learn what they are trying to say (Be patient. It may take time to understand their communications.) ▪ Continue reading, talking, and singing with toddlers

Stage Five	From about Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months, Many Toddlers:	Adults Can:
I speak in sentences.	- Increase their vocabulary rapidly - Make up new words to name objects and experiences - Use two-word sentences such as *Go out* or *My puppy* - Use the same sentence to mean different things by varying their expression - Use negatives (*no* and *not*) and question words (*Why? What?* and *Where?*) - Talk about the present and, as vocabulary and language skills increase, talk about past and future - Understand and respond to many words, simple directions, and questions - Take turns during brief conversations with adults - Imitate words and gestures they hear and see - Use broad arm movements to scribble on paper with crayons and markers - Enjoy picture books and predictable books with words and phrases they can repeat - Help turn the pages in books	- Continue using any of the above strategies that are still appropriate for this age group - Talk to toddlers as much as possible (Describe what they are doing, what you are doing, what other children are doing.) - Name objects, people, actions, and feelings. - Ask questions and make requests. - Give simple directions. - Let toddlers know you understand them by restating their words—*Yes, that is your puppy.* - Answer toddlers' questions.(Remember that toddlers are trying to learn as much as they can about the world, and you are an important source of information.) - Play games with toddlers by asking them to point to familiar people, toys, or body parts—*Where's your nose? Where are your toes?* - Choose books with repetitive words and phrases - Read the same books again and again so toddlers can remember them - Invite toddlers to join in while reading - Store books on low, open shelves so toddlers can look at the books by themselves - Provide nontoxic crayons and markers and large pieces of paper

Stage Six	From about Twenty-Four to Thirty-Six Months, Many Two-Year-Olds:	Adults Can:
I speak in longer sentences.	▪ Make three-word sentences by combining two-word sentences or adding new words ▪ Continue lengthening their sentences ▪ Recognize that a pause means it is their turn to talk ▪ Begin using prepositions (*in, on*), different forms of verbs, plurals (add *s* to words), pronouns (*me, she, he*), articles (*the, a*), and conjunctions (*and*) ▪ May not use standard grammar ▪ Ask *Why?* and *What's that?* again and again ▪ Understand and use concept words such as *in/out, over/under, big/little, top/bottom* ▪ Talk out loud to guide or remind themselves ▪ Follow two-part directions ▪ Tell stories, use language in creative ways, and express their feelings in words ▪ Name the objects in picture books ▪ Follow a simple plot in a story book and join in while being read to ▪ Coordinate eye and hand movements (string large beads on laces) and gain small muscle skills ▪ Grasp crayons and markers in fist and scribble with greater control	▪ Continue using any of the above strategies that are still appropriate for this age group ▪ Hold longer and more complicated conversations with children ▪ Let children know you are interested in what they have to say ▪ Restate children's words using standard grammar (for example, if a child says, *No want juice*, say, *You don't want any juice? That's okay. Would you like milk?* (It is not necessary to correct children's mistakes. Children will master standard forms of grammar when they have had many opportunities to listen to and use language.) ▪ Listen to children's stories and encourage them to play with language, join them in making up silly words, and introduce nonsense rhymes ▪ Help children use words instead of aggression to tell others how they feel or what they want ▪ Read books about familiar experiences such as taking a walk or getting ready for bed and books that introduce new information and help children understand concepts

Stage Six (continued)	**From about Twenty-Four to Thirty-Six Months, Many Two-Year-Olds:**	**Adults Can:**
I speak in longer sentences.		▪ Encourage children to make noises, turn pages, and repeat words and ask children to tell you about the pictures on each page and predict what may happen next ▪ Offer a variety of books children can look at on their own ▪ Provide materials such as small blocks and pegs and pegboards that promote eye-hand coordination and small muscle skills ▪ Encourage children to dress and feed themselves ▪ Invite children to help prepare meals and snacks ▪ Store a good supply of paper, crayons, and markers within children's reach

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Stage Seven	From about Three to Four Years, Many Children:	Adults Can:
I have a lot to talk about.	▪ Expand vocabulary rapidly ▪ Speak in complex sentences using different parts of speech ▪ Learn to use pronouns (*I, you, he, she, we, they*) ▪ Continue to learn about and apply rules of grammar without direct instruction from adults ▪ Learn to apply different forms of negatives (*I didn't do it*) ▪ Make grammatical mistakes because they do not know the exceptions to the rules ▪ Add information to what someone says in a conversation ▪ Ask and answer simple questions ▪ Use language to think, learn, and play with others ▪ May call attention to self, comment on or point out objects or events, make requests, tell others what to do, make plans, describe experiences, and invent dramatic play scenarios ▪ Understand and use language to describe concepts such as *large/small, deep/shallow* ▪ Tell brief and sometimes confusing stories about something that just happened to them ▪ Talk about people and things not present ▪ Imagine what might happen in the future ▪ Recall past events and experiences ▪ Answer open-ended questions such as *What might happen if...*	▪ Continue using any of the above strategies that are still appropriate for this age group ▪ Engage children in conversations to help them learn to take turns, allow others to speak, and stay on the topic ▪ Recognize mistakes as signs that a child is making sense of the rules of grammar ▪ Provide many opportunities for children to talk with each other and with adults about present, past, and future experiences and events ▪ Ask open-ended questions that can be answered in more than one way and stretch children's thinking skills ▪ Offer stimulating dramatic play props and dress-up clothes ▪ Give children something to talk about—go on walks; visit the library, park, and other sites in the community; do errands and chores; and eat meals together ▪ Make comments and ask questions to help children add more information so their stories make sense ▪ Teach children rhymes, fingerplays, and songs from their families and cultures ▪ Have a regular storytime and read upon request the same books again and again and new ones ▪ Leave books where children can reach them so they can retell the stories in their own words

Stage Seven (continued)	From about Three to Four Years, Many Children:	Adults Can:
I have a lot to talk about.	▪ Recite nursery rhymes, repeat fingerplays, and sing songs ▪ Listen attentively to stories with simple plots about characters and experiences they can identify with ▪ Like books with happy endings and lots of repetition ▪ Turn pages of book one at a time ▪ Retell familiar stories to self and others ▪ Hold a crayon or marker between first two fingers and thumb to draw shapes (May combine shapes to make new ones.) ▪ Copy squares, circles, and some letters ▪ Use scribble writing to imitate conventional writing ▪ Increase small muscle skills and eye-hand coordination ▪ Classify items primarily by color or size but also by design and shape	▪ Provide a variety of books in English and home languages that match children's skills and interests and reflect abilities, cultures, ethnic groups, and genders in positive ways ▪ Provide plenty of writing materials—paper, paint, brushes, crayons, and markers ▪ Continue encouraging development of self-help skills such as brushing teeth and zipping up clothes ▪ Offer play materials that build small muscles and increase eye-hand coordination ▪ Offer a variety of interesting and colorful toys and materials that children can sort and classify ▪ Place print that conveys meaning in English and children's home languages throughout the environment (labeled shelves and containers for toys and materials, calendars, schedules, signs, posters, food containers, junk mail, and bulletin boards)

Appendix C

Stage Eight	**From about Four to Five Years, Many Children:**	**Adults Can:**
I discover all forms of language are connected.	▪ Master many rules of grammar (prepositions, possessives, negatives, and past tense) ▪ Converse with other children and adults in long, complex sentences and use words (*and, then, because, but*) to link ideas ▪ Change tone of voice and sentence structure to reflect the listener ▪ Refer to people, events, and things not present ▪ Tell long stories about real or imaginary experiences ▪ Enjoy word play and silly words ▪ Understand and talk about concepts such as *tallest/smallest, same/different, more/less* ▪ Understand and answer complex questions (for example, *What would you do if . . . ?* or *How many different ways can you think of to . . . ?*) ▪ Sort, match, classify, and sequence objects, which contributes to their emerging literacy ▪ Like story books that have plots they can follow, humorous and imaginative characters and events, and colorful, detailed illustrations ▪ Like nonfiction books that provide information ▪ Retell familiar stories in their own words ▪ Can distinguish between drawing and writing ▪ Gain control of crayons, markers, and brushes ▪ Draw figures that represent people and then animals and other objects	▪ Continue using any of the above strategies that are still appropriate for this age group ▪ Involve children in activities—science, art, social studies, music, cooking—that stretch their thinking skills and give them things to talk about ▪ Use routines and chores as opportunities to talk about concepts and ideas ▪ Observe children's dramatic play and provide props to expand their play or take it in a new direction ▪ Invite children to invent and act out stories alone or with each other ▪ Use comparative words when talking with children—*Is that the tallest tree you've ever seen?* or *Which of these two glasses holds more water?* ▪ Ask open-ended questions that encourage children to think of many different possibilities when reading books, observing the results of an experiment, or talking about an imaginary situation ▪ Provide materials that encourage children to sort, match, classify, and sequence—lotto games, puzzles, cups of different sizes, shell or rock collections, a basket of buttons ▪ Offer a variety of books in English and children's home languages that match children's interests and skills and depict abilities, gender, ethnic groups, and cultures in positive ways

Stage Eight (continued)	From about Four to Five Years, Many Children:	Adults Can:
I discover all forms of language are connected.	- Reproduce some shapes and letters - Begin to organize their writing (for example, by putting spaces between words) - Learn about the relationship between speech and writing—print is talk written down - Understand that pictures, numbers, words, and letters are symbols for real things and ideas - Recognize a few whole words such as their names or words on signs such as *Stop* or *Exit*	- Provide a wider variety of writing and drawing materials - Write with children so they can learn how writing is used to convey information - Write children's names and descriptions on their art work and record their stories in homemade books or on large pieces of paper - Demonstrate through the environment, words, and actions how we use language skills every day - Point out words on street signs, newspapers, notices in store windows, food packages, and coupons - Use English and children's home languages on signs, labels, schedules, and so on

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Appendix D

Playing the Conversation Game*

Conversations are nonverbal and verbal interactions between two or more people. During conversations, the participants exchange information and enjoy one another's company. They talk *with* each other, as equal partners. Learning to be a conversation partner is similar to learning how to play a game that is governed by rules. The rules of conversation may vary in different cultures, but generally include taking turns, paying attention to the speaker, adding to the topic being discussed, and letting others know when leaving the conversation. When the conversation partners follow the rules, the game is successful and enjoyable. When the partners do not, the conversation may end abruptly or result in miscommunications. This appendix discusses how families and Head Start staff can engage children of different ages in conversations and help them become skilled conversation partners.

Adults Take Most of the Turns

Very young babies (birth to about eight months) do not know that they can communicate intentionally. Nevertheless, babies can begin learning how to take turns in the conversation game. Adults teach babies about taking turns by responding to cries, coos, smiles, gurgles, and gazes as if babies were sending messages on purpose. In addition, adults can play games with babies. At first, adults will take most of the turns in these games. Over time, babies begin to take turns more often by smiling, cooing, or reaching for a toy. The picture on page D-2, *Ms. H. Takes Most of the Turns*, depicts a young baby learning about taking turns.

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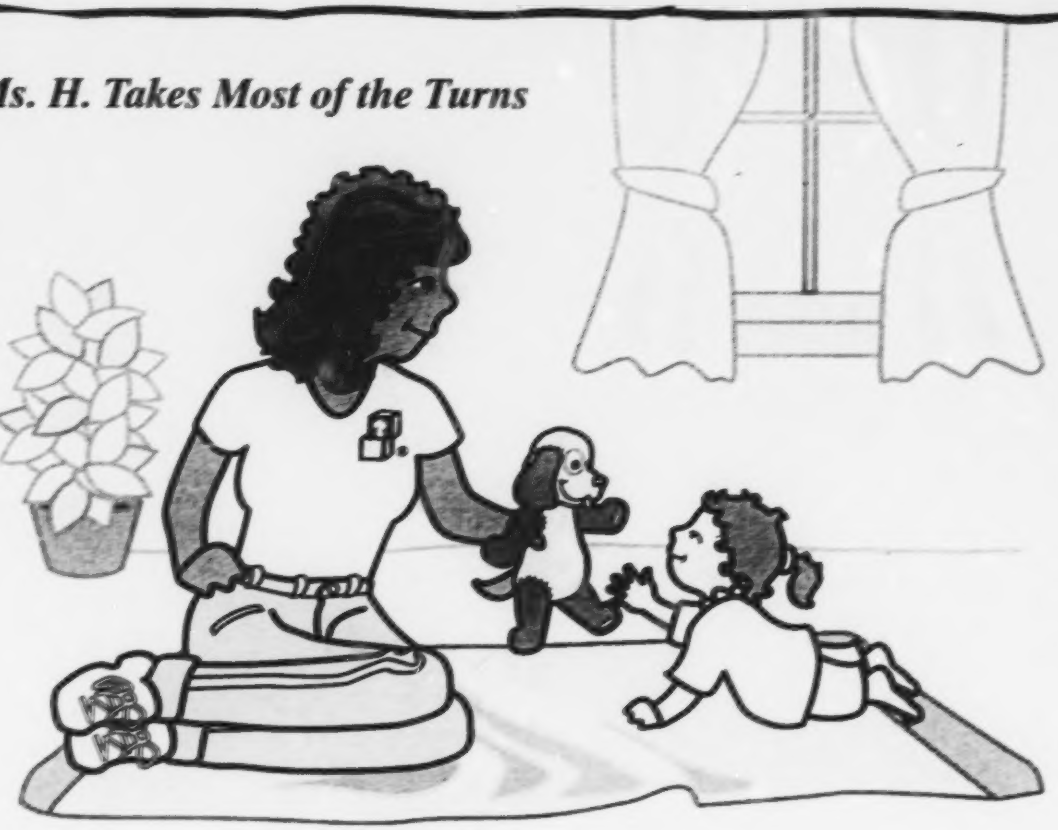
* Based on Elaine Weitzman, *Learning Language and Loving It: A Guide to Promoting Children's Social and Language Development in Early Childhood Settings* (Toronto: The Hanen Centre, 1992), 103–136.

Appendix D

Ms. H. Takes Most of the Turns



Ms. H. tries to get four-month old Janae's attention:

- *She says Janae's name several times. Janae, Janae*
- *She shows Janae a toy. Janae, look at the puppy.*
- *She does something with the toy. Janae, the puppy is barking. Woof. Woof*

Ms. H. responds as if Janae has taken a turn in a conversation by taking some more turns.

- *She talks about the toy. The puppy is soft*
- *She puts the toy behind her back. Where did the puppy go, Janae? Where is he?*
- *She shows Janae the toy again. Here he is. Here is the puppy. Woof. Woof.*

The next time Ms. H. shows Janae the puppy, the baby remembers the game and reponds more quickly. After playing the game again and again, Janae learns to anticipate what will happen next. When Ms. H. puts the puppy behind her back, Janae shows her excitement by beginning to laugh before Ms. H. shows the puppy again.

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Older Babies Learn to Take Turns

Many older babies (about eight to thirteen months) know a lot about conversation. They can:

- Pay attention to the speaker
- Take turns at the appropriate times
- Let the other person take turns
- Continue the conversation by taking more turns

To help older babies become skilled conversational partners, adults can:

- Play games that are fun for babies

- Change a game slightly so babies learn to take turns in different situations

- Make up new games in response to babies' sounds and actions

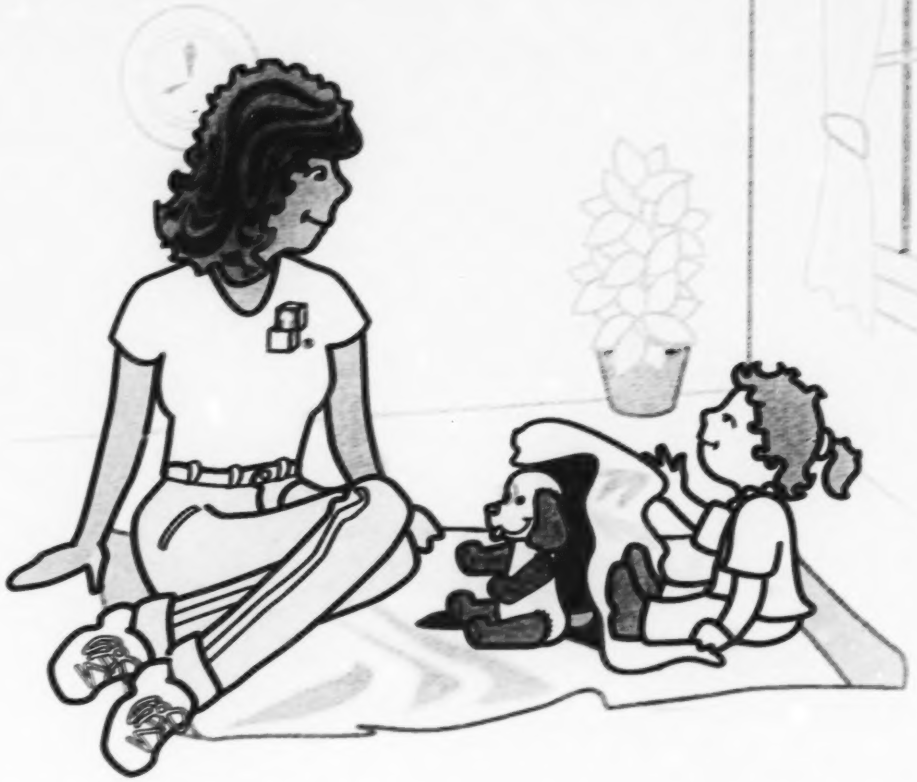
- Play the same games often so babies can connect the words and actions

- Respond to babies' sounds and actions as if they were starting a new game

- Set the stage for a game so the baby can initiate it herself (for example, store toys within the baby's reach)

Appendix D

Janae Learns to Take Turns



Janae (ten months old) and Ms. H. have been playing peek-a-boo puppy, a variation of the game they played when Janae was younger. Today, Ms. H. sits down on the rug where she and Janae usually play and waits for Janae to notice.

Janae sees Ms. H. and goes to get the puppy and her blanket. She sits down facing Ms. H. and sets the puppy and blanket in front of Ms. H. Ms. H. looks at Janae and waits patiently. Janae takes her turn by putting the blanket over the puppy.

For her turn, Ms. H. says, *Where's the puppy? Oh, dear. Janae, where's the puppy?*

Ms. H. leans forward, looks at Janae, and waits for her to take her turn. Janae recognizes these gestures as a sign that it is her turn. She lifts the blanket off the puppy and squeals with delight.

Ms. H. takes another turn. She says, *There he is. Peek-a-boo puppy. You can't hide from Janae!*

The game continues until Janae decides that she wants to do something else.

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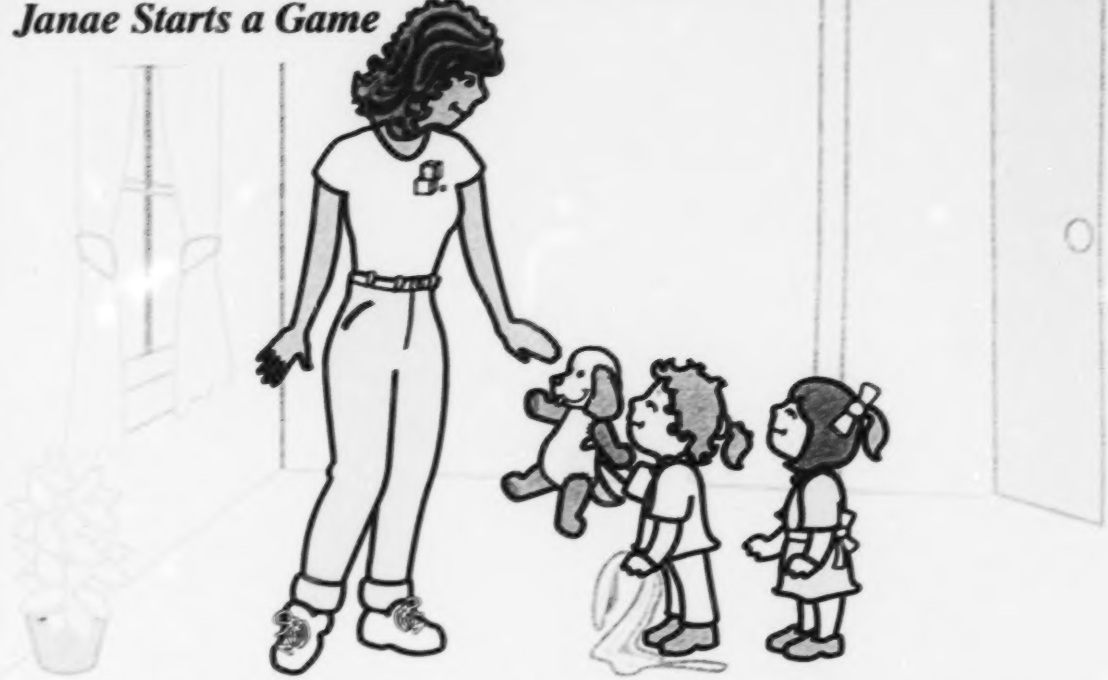
One-Year-Olds Can Start Conversations

By the time babies enter the second year of life (about twelve to eighteen months) they can participate in conversation games *and* start them. They take turns and play different roles at different times.

Janae Starts a Game



Janae (fourteen months old) wants to play peek-a-boo puppy. She carries the puppy and blanket to Ms. H. She says, *Peek?*

Ms. H. responds, *You want to play the puppy game. Okay. Let's ask Viola* [also fourteen months old] *if she wants to play, too. Viola, do you want to play peek-a-boo with us?* Viola nods and joins Ms. H. and Janae.

Ms. H. and the two children sit on the floor in a circle with the puppy and blanket in front of them. Janae puts the blanket over the puppy.

Viola asks, *Where puppy?*

Janae lifts the blanket off the puppy and says, *Peek puppy!*

Viola claps her hands with delight.

Next, Janae covers the puppy and asks, *Where puppy?*

They continue playing until Ms. H. leaves to help another child.

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In the example on page D-5, *Janae Starts a Game*, Ms. H. plays a much more limited role than when she first introduced Janae to the conversation game. Janae has already learned a lot about conversations such as:

- Anyone can start a conversation.
- People take turns in conversations.
- One person talks while the others listen.
- When someone is talking, it is your turn to listen.
- When that person has finished talking, it is your turn to talk.

She is ready for new conversational challenges.

Toddlers, Two-Year-Olds, And Preschoolers Learn to Be Conversation Partners

At about eighteen months, most children speak in short sentences. They are ready to learn how to be equal and active conversational partners. Their first conversations are with an adult. Soon they can converse with another child or a small group. By talking with adults and peers, children gradually learn the following conversational skills:

- When you start or join a conversation:
  - — Say something to someone
  - — Wait for a response
- When someone else is speaking:
  - — Look at the person
  - — Listen to what he or she is saying
  - — Wait until he or she has finished before responding
- When it is your turn to speak:
  - — Add some information related to what the previous speaker said
  - — Ask questions if you do not understand what someone said
  - — Stick to the topic being discussed
  - — Keep it short so someone else can have a turn
- When you want to keep the conversation going—say something new about the topic
- When you are finished with the conversation—let your partner(s) know

Making Conversations a Natural Part of the Day

Most children are eager to participate when conversations are natural, social events. They are less likely to be interested when conversations are used to teach skills or test knowledge. Throughout the day, Head Start staff and families have many opportunities to help children learn about conversations through one-on-one and small group interactions. These opportunities occur during routines such as when children are getting ready for bed or while adults and children do chores together such as wiping the tables before snack. The following examples show adults talking with children during daily events

- While helping Xena put on her boots, Mr. P. talks with her about what she wants to do outdoors—*You're going to build a snow lady. That sounds like fun.*
- At the laundromat, Mr. W. responds to Dion's question about how the dryer works—*Remember how the clothes feel when we take them out of the dryer?*
- During a group socialization session, Mrs. E. helps the children sitting at her family-style breakfast table learn how to listen without interrupting each other—*Yasmine, it's Imani's turn to talk now. You can have a turn when he's finished.*
- At the dinner table, Dawn's family talks about a gathering they will be going to—*Dawn, this will be your first time seeing the dancers. If you sit next to me, I'll tell you what the dances are about.*
- At the sand table, Ms. D. makes a comment to Charisse and David who are taking turns spraying water on the sand—*Spraying water on the sand makes a pretty design. How does the wet sand feel?*
- While walking home from Head Start, Destiny and her dad get caught up on each other's day—*Do you remember me waking you up before I left for the fields this morning?* Destiny replies, *Yep, but then I fell asleep, and grandma woke me up again.*

Playing and Talking with Children

Another effective strategy for engaging children in conversation is to talk while playing together. Some children are more interested in talking when they have something concrete to talk about such as toys and materials. Another advantage of this strategy is that a child who may be reluctant to talk can take nonverbal and verbal turns. For example, Ms. Y. is playing and talking with Leon (three and a half years old) in the block area. She says, *Your tower is very tall.* Leon responds by placing another block on his tower. She makes another comment—*Now it's even higher.* This time he responds verbally, *It's the tallest tower in the world.*

Using Comments and Questions

Adults can engage children in conversations by making comments and asking questions. Children may not respond as quickly or as easily to comments as they do to questions. However, to become skilled conversational partners, children need to learn how to listen and respond to comments as well as questions.

Talking about Mud

Mrs. O. looks out the window and says, *I don't think I've ever seen so much rain.* (Her comment gets the conversation started.)

Marcus comes to the window and says, *It's muddy outside.* (He joins the conversation by adding information.)

Mrs. O. says, *Yes, the rain is making the yard very muddy. How long do you think the yard will stay muddy?* (She acknowledges Marcus' comment and asks a follow-up question to help him take another turn in the conversation.)

Questions can be good conversation starters when they are sincere and acknowledge a child's interests. When Bryanna shows Ms. A. a large pine cone, the teacher asks, *Is that the biggest pine cone you ever saw?* Ms. A. avoids the following kinds of questions because they do not start conversations:

- Questions that test what a child knows—*What kind of tree did that come from?*
- Questions that are overly simple, concrete, or obvious questions and don't need to be answered—*What is that? That's a pine cone, isn't it?*

Extending Conversations

Comments and questions are also effective ways to extend conversations with children. Extended conversations encourage children to be creative, solve problems, and use their imaginations. They use language to make sense of their own experiences and observations. Adults can extend children's conversations—and language skills—by offering explanations, explaining the meaning of new words and using them in conversations, inviting children to make predictions, and dropping into pretend play situations. *My shoes are worn out. Can you please measure my feet? I hope your store has some new shoes to fit me.*

Staying on the Topic

Many young children have a difficult time staying on the topic. Adults can repeat or reword a question to redirect the child back to the topic being discussed. In the following example, Mr. P.'s comments and questions help Ron stay on the topic, and keep the conversation going. He also models standard grammar rather than corrects Ron's language.

Ron Gets a Haircut

Ron **starts the conversation,** *I gots my hair cut.*

Mr. P. **models standard grammar** as he repeats what Ron said. *Yes. I can see you got a haircut.* **He keeps the conversation going** by asking a question. *Did you go to the barber shop?*

Ron **strays off the topic,** *I ate pizza.*

Mr. P. **helps Ron get back to the topic** by repeating the question. *Did you get your hair cut at the barber shop?*

Ron **returns to the topic.** *Yep. Me and my dad went to the barber shop.*

Mr. P. **keeps the conversation going** by making a comment and asking a question. *I need a haircut. Do you think I would like the barber shop?*

Ron **answers the question** and **offers new information**. *Yeah, you would like it. He gived me a lollipop.*

Mr. P. **models standard grammar** as he repeats what Ron said. *The barber gave you a lollipop.* He **acknowledges Ron's previous comment** by asking a question. *Did you eat pizza after your haircut?*

Ron **answers the question** and **adds new information.** *Lots of pizza. Double-cheese pizza.* He **lets Mr. P. know he is leaving the conversation,** *See you later.*

Supporting Small Group Conversations

In any group of young children, some will have more advanced language skills than their peers. These highly verbal children may dominate small group conversations. They often have a lot to say and may interrupt other children or speak for them. These situations call for gentle, but direct, reminders about taking turns, listening while others speak, staying on the topic, and so on. Intervening in this way helps both the verbal child and the child who has difficulty getting into the conversation. The verbal child improves his conversation skills, while the quieter child has more opportunities to express her ideas and feelings.

Head Start staff can use the following strategies to support children's involvement in group conversations and discussions:

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- **Help all children join in the conversation.** Assume that all children have something to say. Make it easier for a child to express her ideas by saying, *Julia wants to add something she knows about trees.*

- **Show respect for children's ideas.** Try to figure out what a child means and invite him to say more. *Tell us some more about your plans.* Help children learn to encourage one another to extend their ideas. *Frank had an interesting idea for what to do with this big box. Can anyone think of a question to ask him about his idea?*

- **Help children stay on the topic.** When a child says something that is unrelated to the topic, acknowledge the comment while gently steering her back to the topic at hand. *Charisse, that's nice that you had waffles for breakfast. Do you have any ideas about what might have lived in this shell?*

- **Encourage children to express their ideas clearly.** Sometimes young children begin a story in the middle or leave out some important details. Help a child complete a story by saying, *Inez, start at the beginning. We don't know where you went, so you have to tell us.*

- **Make conversations interesting.** Introduce topics related to children's activities and interests, build on children's past experiences, invite children to make comparisons, and ask questions that can be answered in several different ways. Pause to give children time to think before responding. Encourage children to add to the discussion by saying, *Tell me more about that.*

Summary

Children learn about the conversation game beginning in infancy, when family members and teachers such as Head Start staff talk and play with them. Children need a lot of practice to learn how to be equal partners in conversations. At first, adults not only take the lead in conversations, but also take most of the turns. Over time, as children learn more about the conversation game, they take more turns and eventually learn to start conversations. Holding conversations with children is one of the most effective ways to support their language development. When adults talk with children, they send important messages such as, *I'm interested in what you are doing. Tell me more. I want to hear what you have to say.*

Appendix E

Books for Young Children

Babies and Young Toddlers

Cloth and soft vinyl books with simple pictures of familiar objects are appropriate for babies. These books can be washed and sanitized after babies chew them. (Example: Lucy Cousins' series of soft, cloth books filled with foam such as *Hen on the Farm*.)

Board books are similar to cloth and vinyl books, except they have cardboard pages. Older babies and toddlers like these books because they fit in their hands and the pages are easy to turn. (Example: *Clap Hands*, by Helen Oxenbury.)

Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Participation books invite children to do something—touch a page, lift a flap, put a finger in a hole. (Example: *Spot's First Picnic* from the *Spot* series, by Eric Hill, and *Pat the Bunny*, by Dorothy Kunhardt.)

Picture concept books have large illustrations or photographs and a few words on each page. They focus on familiar objects or abstract ideas such as colors, shapes, opposites, or sizes. Picture concept books have cardboard, cloth, or vinyl pages for babies and toddlers or paper pages for older toddlers and preschoolers. (Example: *Exactly the Opposite*, by Tana Hoban.)

Wordless picture books tell a story through pictures and few or no words. Children can read the story by looking at the pictures or make up a new story to go with the illustrations. (Example: The *Good Dog Carl* series, by Alexandra Day.)

Beginning picture storybooks tell a story through many illustrations and a few words per page. The stories often have a single theme and focus on daily life activities that are familiar to most young children. (Example: *So Much*, by Trish Cooke.)

Traditional literature includes nursery rhymes, fairy tales, familiar stories, fables, and folk tales from a variety of cultures. These stories often come from the oral tradition of storytelling. (Example: *Lon Po Po: A Red Riding Hood Tale from China*, by Ed Young.)

Appendix E

ABC and counting books present the alphabet and numbers in fun, imaginative ways with bright, colorful illustrations. (Example: *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, an alphabet book by Bill Martin, Jr., and John Archambault, and *Ten Little Rabbits*, a counting book by Virginia Grossman and Sylvia Long.)

Predictable books include patterned text, repetitive words and phrases, and predictable plots. Children like them because once they remember the story and repeated words and phrases, they can join in at story time and later retell the stories to themselves. (Example: *Jump Frog Jump*, by Robert Kalan.)

Poetry books include one, richly illustrated poem or a collection of poems appropriate for young children. (Example: *Honey, I Love*, by Eloise Greenfield.)

Older Toddlers and Preschoolers

Informational books provide facts and realistic pictures or photographs about specific topics such as buildings, dinosaurs, trains, nature, geography, seasons, or life in other countries. (Example: *Bread, Bread, Bread* and *Houses and Homes* from the *People around the World* series, by Ann Morris.)

Picture storybooks tell a story through illustrations and words. One book may have multiple themes. Picture storybooks present everyday life, discuss real-life challenges, address fears children face, and explore feelings about changing life experiences (such as moving to a new home). Some picture books include nonsense and fantasy (silly words, characters, and stories). Examples include the following:

- Everyday life—*One Hot Summer Day*, by Nina Crews
- Real-life challenge—*Amazing Grace*, by Mary Hoffman
- Fears—*There's a Nightmare in My Closet*, by Mercer Mayer
- Changing life experiences—*Everett Anderson's Goodbye*, by Lucille Clifton
- Fantasy—*Abuela*, by Arthur Dorros

Easy-to-read books are for emergent readers who can read by themselves. These books use a limited vocabulary, often have rhymes, and are usually predictable. They are designed to help children learn to read and are not meant to be great literature. (Examples: The *Frog and Toad* series, by Arnold Lobel, books by Dr. Seuss, and the *Little Bear* series, by Else Minarik.)

Reference books that children can use with the help of adults include very simple dictionaries (in English and home languages), nature guides, cookbooks, and instruction manuals for computer software. (Example: *Pretend Soup and Other Real Recipes*, by Mollie Katzen.)

Big books are very large versions of popular books. Some are available in English and Spanish. Reading big books aloud lets a small group of children see the print and the illustrations. This lets children hear the words and follow along with the print as they do during family story times. The large type also helps children tell the difference between print and pictures. (Examples: *Freight Train*, by Donald Crews, and *Make Way for Ducklings*, by Robert McCloskey.)

Choosing Books with Diverse Characters and Themes for Young Children*

Books Build Self-Images

The words and pictures in books send powerful messages to young children. Books can help children build positive self-images about their own cultures, families, gender, and abilities and teach them to value the diverse characteristics that make each person a unique individual. Unfortunately, poorly written and illustrated books can send negative messages to children: *Only girls (or boys) can do certain jobs. Your family is not as good as someone else's. People with disabilities can't do things on their own. People with different skin color are lazy, sneaky, or scary. All of the people from a certain race look and think alike.*

When choosing books for young children, it is important to be an alert consumer. Use the following guidelines to help you select an inventory of appropriate books for the children in your class or group.

Get to Know the Characters

The inventory of books available for children should include a range of people found within a race, culture, or other group. The characters should have a variety of occupations, homes, experiences, and abilities.

The names of characters from a specific culture should reflect the group's cultural traditions.

The beliefs and values of characters should reflect the diversity found within the group at large.

Books should introduce a variety of family compositions—for example, a single mother or father with one or more children, grandparents who play key roles in nurturing children, extended families who share a home and each other's lives.

Characters should not be relegated to the roles and behaviors that are stereotypical of their group. For example, children with disabilities should be shown as individuals who do not need the help of others to be active and creative participants.

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* Based on Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force, *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children* (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989), 143–144; and Violet Harris, "From the Margin to the Center of Curriculum: Multicultural Children's Literature," in Bernard Spodek and Olivia N. Saracho, editors, *Language and Literacy in Early Education* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1993), 128–129.

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Appendix F

Examine the Illustrations

Illustrations should not use stereotypical caricatures of a group's physical features. For example, it is inappropriate for an artist to draw all people from one race with identical facial features such as slanted eyes or broad noses.

Illustrations should depict people from different races in different ways. For example, it is not appropriate to indicate that a character is African-American, Asian, or Hispanic by merely darkening his or her skin color.

Check the Story Line

Characters should be depicted as achieving success through actions that are accepted and valued by their group. For example, a character should not have to give up a behavior held dear by his family or culture so he can *make it* in the world.

Minority characters should not have to be *the best* at something to be valued and accepted by the majority group. For example, a minority character should not have to be an *extremely* talented athlete to win a game, a girl should not have to *outdo* the boys to be noticed, and a minority child need not be *unnaturally* forgiving when friends are unkind to her.

Minority characters should be shown as independent thinkers who can face challenges and solve problems. For example, they should use their own abilities to achieve success rather than relying on the actions of others who *save* them or *make things better*.

Female characters should be shown as intelligent and capable individuals who represent a wide range of roles. Women and girls should be more than pretty caretakers of children and men.

Look for books with culturally based themes and books about realistic, everyday events and activities that include characters from diverse groups.

Appendix G

Getting to Know Children's Literature

There are numerous ways to learn about high-quality books for young children. You can find descriptions and lists of recommended books through Internet Web sites, publications of organizations that support literacy, and books for parents and teachers.

Using the World Wide Web to Learn about Children's Literature

Children's Literature Web Guide
http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html

The subtitle of this site, Internet Resources Related to Books for Children and Young Adults, clearly describes its purpose. Visitors will find reviews of children's books; updated information on children's book awards; and links to resources for parents, teachers, and storytellers.

KidLit
http://isit.com/kidlit/

This site includes reviews of children's books, resources, information about authors and illustrators, and special areas for children and adults.

Vandergrift's Children's Literature Page
http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/special/kay/childlit.html

Visitors to this site can share information about children's literature, illustrations that depict multicultural images of childhood, and the effect of the media on children's enjoyment of books and reading.

Read Aloud!
http://funnelweb.utcc.utk.edu/~epling/readaloud.html

The annotated book lists at this site are divided by age group, including babies and toddlers; three-, four-, and five-year-olds; five-, six-, and seven-year-olds. There are also tips for reading aloud and links to other related sources.

Published Book Lists

American Library Association
HQ Library and Information Center
50 East Huron
Chicago, IL 60611
312-944-6780

Coretta Scott King Award Recipients (annual)
Notable Children's Books (annual)
Randolph Caldecott Medal Winners

Appendix G

Books for Every Child
Many Faces, Many Stories: Multicultural Books for Children
101 Books for Children: A Good Place to Start
You and Me Together: Stories about Friendship
How to Raise a Reader: Sharing Books with Infants and Toddlers
How to Raise a Reader: Sharing Videos and Sound Recordings with Infants and Toddlers

Association for Childhood Education International
11502 Georgia Avenue, Suite 315
Wheaton, MD 20902–1924
800–423–3563

Bibliography of Books for Children (annotations for more than 1500 titles)

Bank Street College
The Child Study Children's Book Committee
610 West 112th Street
New York, NY 10025

Children's Books of the Year (annual annotated guide)
Paperback Books for Children, a Selected List through Age 13

Boston Public Library
Community Service Office
P.O. Box 286
Boston, MA 02117
617–536–5400

Black Is (annual booklist of new and old recommended titles)

Center for Children's Books
University of Chicago Press
P.O. Box 37005
Chicago, IL 60637

Bulletin (each issue includes reviews of more than 70 children's books)

Children's Book Council
568 Broadway, Suite 404
New York, NY 10012
800-999-2160

Choosing a Child's Book (This pamphlet includes a list of selected guides and resources.)

Note: This nonprofit organization encourages the use and enjoyment of books and literacy-related materials. Their catalog includes book-related posters, book bags, bookmarks, and other items.

District of Columbia Public Library
Children's Service Office
901 G Street, NW, Room 432
Washington, DC 20001
202-727-1151

The Afro-American in Books for Children (annotated bibliography)

The Horn Book, Inc.
14 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

Children's Classics: A Book List for Parents (favorite titles for infants through young adults)
The Horn Book Magazine (a bimonthly journal about books for children with a book review section)
Why Children's Books? (a quarterly newsletter for parents about children's books)

International Reading Association
Children's Book Council Joint Committee
800 Barksdale Road
P.O. Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714-8139

Children's Choices (annual)

Library of Congress
Children's Literature Center
Washington, DC 20540
Order from: Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402

Books for Children (annual)

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Appendix G

Los Angeles Public Library
Children's Services Coordinator
433 South Spring Street, #804
Los Angeles, CA 90013
213–612–3285

Ventanas al Mundo (an annotated bibliography of children's books by and about Hispanics)

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1509 Sixteenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036–1426
800–424–2460

Young Children and African-American Literature (annotated booklist developed by National Black Child Development Institute)

National Black Child Development Institute
1023 Fifteenth Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
202–387–1281

African American Family Reading List, 2nd ed. (a booklet listing books and resources on and by African Americans)
Beyond the Stereotypes: A Guide to Resources for Black Girls and Young Women (lists of books and audiovisual materials on women and African-American culture)

New York Public Library
Office of Branch Libraries
455 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016

The Black Experience in Children's Books (descriptions of titles about black life in the United States, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United Kingdom)
Libros en Español (children's books in Spanish and bilingual books)

Parent's Choice Foundation
P.O. Box 185
Newton, MA 02168
617–965–5913

Parent's Choice (a quarterly newspaper that features reviews of children's books, video games, and toys)

Reading is Fundamental
Publications Department
P.O. Box 2344
Washington, DC 20026

Choosing Good Books for Your Children: Infancy to Age 12, a Guide for Parents
When We Were Young: Favorite Books for RIF Kids, RIF Volunteers, and Readers of Renown

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Publication Sales
P. O. Box 7842
Re: Bulletin #1923
Madison, WI 53707–7841

The Cooperative Children's Book Center publishes an annotated bibliography of multicultural titles from 1980–1990. It can be found in most public libraries or purchased from the above address.

Resources for Parents and Teachers

M. R. Jalongo, *Young Children and Picture Books*, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, D.C., 1988.

Eden Ross Lipson, *The New York Times Guide to the Best Books for Children*, Random House, New York, 1991.

Reading Is Fundamental, Ruth Graves, editor, *The RIF Guide to Encouraging Young Readers*, Doubleday, New York, 1987.

Jim Trelease, *The New Read-Aloud Handbook*, 4th revised ed., Penguin Books, New York, 1995.

Appendix H

Reading with Babies and Toddlers*

From Birth to about Three Months

Reading can begin soon after a baby's birth. He or she will feel comforted by listening to a familiar voice. Shared reading times generally begin at about three months when a child can hold up his head without adult support. Before then, it may be difficult to hold the baby and the book. Open books and put them where babies can see them—in a crib or on the floor. Young babies like books with large pictures or designs on a contrasting background. Recite rhymes and sing songs with babies.

About Four to Six Months

Babies at this stage want to explore books. They chew, suck, crumple, and shake them. Cloth and soft vinyl books that can be washed and sanitized are best for this age group. They like large pictures or designs on a contrasting background and enjoy listening as their favorite adults recite rhymes and sing songs with them.

About Six to Nine Months

As babies develop small motor skills, they may try to turn the thick cardboard pages of a board book. Babies at this stage are not yet interested in stories. They like books with pictures of simple objects that the reader can point to and name.

About Nine to Twelve Months

Babies at this stage are beginning to pay attention to the content of a book. They may understand that the objects and events pictured in books are the same as those in their own world. Cardboard books are most appropriate because most babies in this age group have trouble handling paper pages without tearing them. At around twelve months, babies may begin talking about the objects and events in books. Sometimes babies repeat the sounds in a book and the names of objects.

About Twelve to Eighteen Months

Most young toddlers like books about familiar objects, events, animals, and people. They enjoy simple concept books with pictures and a few words, but no plot. During read-aloud sessions, some toddlers babble along as if they were reading, too. Some toddlers get very excited while being read to because they recognize an object in the book that exists in real life. They jump up and run to get the item (for example, a cup, stuffed animal, shoe, or blanket). Toddlers tend to like bedtime reading sessions when they are already relaxed.

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* Based on Judith A. Schickadanz, *More Than the ABCs: The Early Stages of Reading and Writing* (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1986), 12–22.

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Appendix H

About Eighteen to Thirty-Six Months

Stories about real-life experiences and familiar feelings are popular with this age group. They like predictable books with repetition and rhymes that they can repeat. They like "touch me" books and books featuring familiar objects they can point at and name. Toddlers at this stage can look at the pictures while listening to an adult read. Older toddlers can still get excited when they recognize objects in books. If they know how to say "spoon," they may say the word rather than jump up to find a spoon. Toddlers in this age group may look at books alone. They point to objects in picture books and say the words out loud. Toddlers may repeat some of the text of a familiar book in their own words. This shows that the toddler understands the meaning of the text, even if the words are not repeated exactly as written. If a toddler is very familiar with a story, the adult reader can pause to let the child say the ending of the sentence. Many toddlers also recognize the signs and logos for favorite restaurants and foods.

Appendix I

Learning about Writing*

Writing is communicating with others by putting ideas in print. Most young children find it easier to learn to form the letters of the alphabet than to read them. One reason for this may be that writing is something they can control, while reading requires them to find meaning in the words that other people have created. The development of writing skills depends on eye-hand coordination and visual perception. Often, children can distinguish between letter forms before they have the skills needed to write them.

Children pass through stages as they develop the skills used in drawing and writing. At each stage children acquire new information about writing. They use what they already know to make sense of new discoveries. Over time, they come to many understandings that lead them to conventional writing—writing that follows the accepted rules of form, grammar, and spelling.

Stages of Drawing and Writing

Early scribbling describes what older babies and toddlers do when first introduced to crayons and paper. They grasp the crayon in a fist and make random marks on paper. They enjoy the physical experience of holding a crayon and moving their hand back and forth across the paper. They show little interest in the products of their scribbling.

Controlled scribbling usually begins after a child has spent several months doing random scribbling. At this stage, children discover that they can control the marks they make with a crayon or marker. This ability is the result of cognitive and physical gains. The child's small muscle skills and eye-hand coordination have improved, as has the ability to think before doing something. Controlled scribbling gives children a sense of power and control over their environment. They explore scribbling techniques, colors, and ways to use different writing tools. A child might scribble in lines, circles, or zigzags, often repeating specific actions and forms again and again.

In the *basic forms stage* children recognize forms such as rectangles, squares, and circles in their scribbles. As children's small muscle control and eye-hand coordination improves, they find they can repeat the actions that led to forming these shapes. Children combine the forms in different ways in their drawing and writing, sometimes including scribbles and basic forms on the same piece of paper. Although they do not set out to draw a specific object or person, children sometimes name their drawings after they are finished. Children also engage in scribble writing—horizontal, linear scribbles that go across the page as if they were actual words. Scribble writing does not look like actual letters. Its connected loops and lines resemble the writing system used by a child's culture and home language. Eventually, a child's scribbles begin to look more and more like letters. At first, the scribbles have jagged edges and then features that look like letters—straight and curved lines and lines that cross each other. Many times children separate the scribble writing from the rest of their drawing. This shows that they understand that drawing and writing are different. Some children read their scribble writing out loud as if it were a story that described the drawing.

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* Based on Mary Mayesky, Donald Neuman, and Raymond J. Wlodkowski, *Creative Activities for Young Children*, 3rd ed. (Albany, N.Y.:Delmar Publishers, 1985), 97–105; and Kathryn F. Whitmore and Yetta M. Goodman, "Transforming Curriculum in Language and Literacy," in Sue Bredekamp and Teresa Rosegrant, eds., *Reaching Potentials: Transforming Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment*, Vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1995), 149–157.

The *pictorial stage* begins when children can combine marks and basic forms to draw pictures that others can recognize. Children understand that their pictures are symbols that represent real things. This understanding goes hand in hand with the knowledge that words, too, are symbols. At this stage, children think about what they want to draw or paint, carry out their plan, and give their creation a name. They may continue to include scribble writing alongside the picture. Children often write their names on their pictures—the first letter of their first name, some of the letters in their name, or the entire name. They may also write other letters they are mastering. When children begin writing letters on purpose, they may make them backward or upside down. Gradually, they learn to write letters right side up and facing in the conventional direction. Handwriting comes later as children experiment with the mechanics of forming letters and words in conventional ways.

Children's Literacy Discoveries

Children learn about writing at the same time and in conjunction with knowledge of speaking and reading. Although young children do not yet write in conventional ways, families and Head Start staff should encourage emergent writing in home and in Head Start settings. Writing focuses children's attention on print, helps them learn that letters represent sounds, and contributes to their emergent reading skills. As they make discoveries such as those described below, children build their understanding of oral and written forms of language.

Drawing and Writing Are Different

Young children sometimes use drawing as a way to communicate. They *read* their drawings as if they were reading printed words. By about age three, most children have figured out that writing and drawing are different. They make different marks when drawing than they do when writing. Their drawings clearly look like pictures, and their scribble writing looks like the writing they have seen adults use. As children discover more about writing, they unintentionally make marks that resemble letters. While looking at his work, a child may be surprised to find that his marks are similar to a familiar letter—*That's an E. I made an E.* They bring their papers to an adult—someone who can read—and ask, *What does it say?* Other times, children believe that what they have written carries meaning. They can read their scribble writing to someone else.

The Written Version of a Name Is a Symbol for That Person

Young children are very interested in themselves. Usually the first word a child writes conventionally is his or her first name. This accomplishment occurs after the child has conducted many experiments with writing. At first, children may draw pictures to symbolize themselves. Over time, they gradually go through the following stages:*

- A child uses scribbles to represent his name.
- A child uses actual letters from his name (one letter, the first few letters, or the first and last letters).
- A child writes his complete name in a way that others can recognize.
- The child writes his name by putting the letters in conventional order.
- The child writes his name conventionally, but some letters are reversed and some are in reverse order.
- The child writes his first and last name.

Discoveries about reading accompany children's exploration of name writing. For example, when Azim sees an *A* on a box of cereal, he recognizes the letter and announces that his name is on the box. He considers the letter *A* to belong to him and nobody else. Over time, Azim figures out that the letter *A* can be used for other purposes.

Children often apply their knowledge of the first letter in each other's names to make new literacy discoveries. For example, a child reads *Bus* on the language experience chart because she recognizes the letter *B*. She knows it is the same letter as the one that comes at the beginning of her friend Brittany's name.

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*Adapted from Lieberman, Evelyn. "Name Writing and the Preschool Child." ERIC Clearinghouse for Elementary and Early Childhood Education, 1985. (ERIC Document No. ED 269 759.)

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Appendix I

There Are Certain Rules That Apply to Conventional Writing

It takes lots of experience and exploration for children to discover the rules of conventional writing. Their experiments with writing build self-confidence, which helps them take risks and learn new things. Many children will master conventional writing without being corrected by adults.

Children sometimes make words by writing the letters they know in random order. The letters are usually from their own name and other familiar names, words, and phrases. Although children can read the words to someone else, this reading is not related phonetically to the letters they have used. For example, Stephanie might write, *PTESH* and *PNIST*, two words composed from the letters in her name. When asked what words these are, she says, *milk* and *oatmeal*. When children write words in this way, they show that they understand two important rules of conventional writing: letters make up words, and words have different meanings when the letters are combined in different ways. With more experience, children learn about phonetics—the sound each letter represents.

As children continue to learn about writing, they use invented spellings to communicate messages to other people. Their writing may look like random letters placed on the page without a plan. Sometimes children write using all consonants and no vowels. These forms of writing are usually based on a system devised by the child, using what he already knows about reading and writing. For example, when a child uses one letter to represent each syllable or word, he is using his knowledge of phonetics. When asked, children can read their writing to others. Over time, they make more discoveries about written language and combine these discoveries with what they already know to increase their understanding. One sign of such progress occurs when a child writes words she knows in conventional ways and uses invented spelling for the rest of the message.

Symbols and Print in the Environment and in Books Have Consistent Meaning

Children who have gained this understanding know that each time they see the logo for a favorite restaurant or brand of sneakers, it means the same thing. They know that a sign reading *Exit* indicates a door for leaving the building and that this meaning stays the same at different times—today and tomorrow—and in different places—at the center and at church. They also know that we always read the words in a book the same way. The words and the meanings they convey do not change. They apply this understanding in their own writing. When asked to read their writing, they will read it the same way from one day to the next.

Practices That Support Literacy Learning

A child's environment and experiences at home, at Head Start, and in the community greatly influence his or her learning about oral and written forms of language. Adults—families and Head Start staff—do not need to get children ready to write. Children's own curiosity will lead them to make their own discoveries. Adults can assist by creating literacy-rich environments and building on what children can already do and what they already know. The following practices support children's emerging literacy skills:

- Read aloud and talk about books with children every day.
- Provide a variety of reading and writing materials.
- Give children time and a place to read and write.
- Point out words in the environment.
- Provide alphabet books and puzzles and an alphabet chart hung at children's eye-level so they can use it as a reference.
- Write messages to children.
- Encourage children to write messages to others.
- Write down what children say about their drawings or experiences.
- Answer children's questions—how to make a letter, how to spell or read a word.
- Encourage children to write their names on their belongings.
- Read and write in children's presence so they can see print being used in meaningful ways.

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